We Go Together

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Teen And Up Audiences

Archive Warning:
Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Category:
Gen, M/M

Fandom:
僕のヒーローアカデミア | Boku no Hero Academia | My Hero Academia

Relationship:
Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Midoriya Izuku, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead & Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Aizawa Shouta & Nezu

Character:
Midoriya Izuku, Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Nezu, Yamada Hizashi | Present Mic, Kayama Nemuri | Midnight, Takami Keigo | Hawks, Usagiyama Rumi | Miruko, Shigaraki Tomura | Shimura Tenko, Gran Torino (My Hero Academia), Dabi (My Hero Academia), Todoroki Touya, Toga Himiko, Ectoplasm (My Hero Academia), U.A. Faculty (My Hero Academia), Midoriya Inko, Maijima Higari | Power Loader, Eri (My Hero Academia), Yagi Toshinori | All Might

Additional Tags:
Parental Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Dadzawa - An Aizawa Shota Zine, Smart Midoriya Izuku, Time Travel, Time Travel Fix-It, BAMF Midoriya Izuku, BAMF Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Protective Nezu, Protective Midoriya Izuku, Protective Aizawa Shouta | Eraserhead, Quirkless Midoriya Izuku, Midoriya Izuku No Longer Has One for All, Found Family, Dabi is Todoroki Touya, Hurt/Comfort, Good Friends and Protective Heroes, Adoption All Around, Protective U.A. Staff, Protective Midoriya Inko, Inko and Hizashi form an Alliance, Villain Redemption, Happy Ending

Language:
English

Series:

Part 2 of Dadzawa and Problem Child Works

Collections:

Works Loved By Luna04, Dadzawa and his gremlin children, Bnha Bookclub Discord Recs, A Labyrinth of Fics, Time travel fics that are good and worth the read, □Izuku and his Collection of Dads□, its-yaboijojo Read Later/Favorites, Love these stuff UwU, death need not apply, I just love these fics, Make Me Cy rip out my heart, Sven's Absolute Top Fics, No_ofa_roundhurrr, nonsense station's discord recs!, Mha heart mah soul, Best of Hurt/Comfort, BNHA Fics I Adore, nomu apocalypse with a dash of time travel, ☆□My Hero Stories Worth Your Time☆□, Bnha bests, 💔My Hero Stories That Made Me Cry💔, Quality Fics, Aizawa and Izuku Mentor-Parent Fics, Honestly every fanfic of Izuku I have ever read., Bnha timetravel fics, BNHA time shenanigans, thiccboimork's reading list, My morning bnha tea, Fics that give me *ideas*, Darkside_Dreamer's_Completed_Favorites, Best Fics I've ever Read, Angsty Bnha, Some good bnha, mars's bnha fanfiction library, Fics that Prove Fanfic is an Art, Ashes' Library, Finished Fics, A Picky Vest's Favorites, DerangedDeceiver's Favorite Fics, Lovely Pieces, Got 99 problems but these ain't one, Fics that bring me life, Going Plus Ultra, Favorites BNHA☆, You haven't lived if you haven't read this, 99NicelyFinishedFics, Deku Has A Brain, Why must you torture me with these good fics?, Flashfreeze Recs, great fics from all fandoms :), ☆ Little Red's BNHA Library ☆, BEST BOI IZUKU_top BNHA works, ✧✧I don't have a personal life✧✧, Marmalade's MHA Mayhem ^_^, BNHAMultiChapters, Like A Favorite Sweater, BNHA_Complete_Fics, My Fav BNHA Complete Works, Plus Ultra! MHA Fics, kingkiller's encyclopedia of bnha fics, Dadzawa for the Soul, Fics for D-Nasty, Re-read a thousand times, The Witch's Woods, seer's dadzawa and izuku fics ☆, hufflepuffdemiwizard's completed works, MHA dadzawa or dadmic and their zero-regrets family □, Kai's Eclectic Collection of Fics, my personal stash of good bnha shit, These fics emotionally wrecked me, 📚 Fanfic Forum Discord Recs, □Dadzawa protects the Green Bean!💚, BNHA Rereadables 🔊, Niks 2.0, *+.。·*♡The Favoured Ones♡*·。.+*, 👌□ good shit, BaNHAmmer, hello yes i can't stop thinking about these works, I need a good parental figure [read: Dadzawa] in my life, Creative Chaos Discord Recs, Pomarac's All Time Faves<3, Lady's collection of PERFECT fics., Nohn's Favorites, Dadzawa Soup for The Soul (TiaLee), Madworld's favorite BNHA, the reason i'm an insomniac, Would enjoy as a podfic, goodlol, □Lux's fav fics□, Amazing fics :D, my little problem hero, Completed but marked for later, Mays My Villain Academia, Fics to hyperfixate on, Seul's

Favorite BNHA Fics, Миники по академии и сборники, 💙 Dadzawa and other💙, 🤍очень хорошо🤍, Feral's favorites, BNHA Too must angst (But i love it), FDA Approved Organic Free Range Fanfiction, MHA Fics I Dream About

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We Go Together

by Blueseabird2

Summary

Aizawa refuses to let his Problem Child travel back in time alone, even to fix a future where All for One was the victor. They go back with a plan that's more of a list, spend a year technically missing, and become rather effective vigilantes that fix some rather serious problems. And then it's time to be found, which seems to primarily result in lots of support and many hugs. Neither Izuku or Aizawa complain very much.

Notes

Hello! So here's a Dadzawa time travel story where a the former Top Ten pro hero Deku and underground hero Eraserhead have lost everyone they ever loved except each other so go back in time to Fix That. I hope you enjoy!

Lost and Found

Eraserhead disappeared on a Friday.

No one noticed for almost a week. There was, far too late, an official inquiry about the reason his handler hadn't reported Eraserhead missing when the man didn't check in at the end of his summer patrol route. The inquiry was insisted upon by a very loud and rather distraught Present Mic and backed up by a deathly quiet and rather furious Nezu.

The results basically said that Eraserhead was known to be a rather independent hero and his newbie handler fell into to the category that saw underground heroes as stepping stones on the way to managing more lucrative daylight heroes.

No one was satisfied with this answer. A low mutter built and ebbed with the certainty of tides. He wasn't immediately found and the initial momentum of his case was lost fairly quickly, what with the complete and utter lack of anything resembling evidence, but his case was never forgotten.

Nor was it ever suggested that Eraserhead choose to leave.

Eraserhead would have been the first to say that he didn't have many friends, but being unsociable didn't mean he was unknown. Being underground meant he was unknown to the public, not the hero community.

Aizawa had colleagues. The staff at U.A. were *angry.* Someone had taken one of their own and the entire staff, from Nezu to Lunch Rush, was ready to move at the tiniest sign.

Aizawa had students. The students were *loyal.* The kids that proved themselves from the very start or improved themselves enough to be re-enrolled, they survived. They thrived. They spent the entire time after their former teacher's disappearance with their nose to the ground and their feet hitting their patrol routes.

Eraserhead had the police force. The police were *motivated.* The regular enforcers of the law were in the unique position to have tangible proof that Eraserhead might not be flashy, but he finished the job at all costs. He also routinely finished his paperwork. On time.

Eraserhead had the pro heroes. The heroes, both daylight and underground, were *bereft.* Not all of them, Eraserhead was one man who hated attention, but there was a hole that almost no one had expected. Eraserhead was the backup and he would be backed up the moment anyone could find him (and avenged if they couldn't).

Eraserhead had the underground. The people on the fringes of society were *pissed.* Eraserhead was their hero, the one who saw the worst and kept coming back. The one who handed out jelly pouches and asked kids on the wrong path what they thought they were doing and actually listed to their answers. The underground watched all the places the rest of the heroes didn't.

And still, no one found him.

"Hey, Zawa. So. Uh. I have a quirk?"

"Did you break your bones? We don't have many first aid supplies left but we can use-"

"No! No, Zawa, One for All isn't back."

"Problem Child."

"Have I told you how much I appreciate that nickname even though I'm not longer a kid?"

"Stop deflecting."

"Time travel is a thing I can do. Once."

"…You're taking me with you, Problem Child. I don't care if that's not how the quirk works or that you're a professional or old or whatever- oof. Stop that. Stop crying. Deku."

"Mmm-hmm."

"Problem Child…We can't go too far back. I'm not changing diapers and you need to be able to pull your weight."

"Yeah, Zawa. And we're going to be so fucked up. That's harder to explain in a baby. And at least one of us should have our hero licence… and I need to be old enough to punch All for One and Shigaraki in the face."

“We’ll add it to the list.”

“What list?”

“The one we’re starting. I’m not time-travelling with you and your trouble-magnet tendencies without extensive preparation. Did you ever listen to your teachers?”

Eraserhead was found on a Thursday almost a year after he’d vanished. He was covered in blood, missing three fingers, and sitting in a puddle that the heroes hoped was additional blood, but suspected was something else entirely.

He wasn’t found by accident, nor was he found on purpose. In fact, he wasn’t so much found as Nezu received a phone call all but detailing his location.

“Is it a rat, is it a bear, is it a dog? No one knows! Prinicple Nezu speaking.”

There was a sharp breath on the other end of the phone, and Nezu frowned, or as close as he could manage with his snout. “Please identify yourself. This is a personal number and I’d like to know how you received it.” Nezu’s tone might have been harsher than normal, but it had been a trying a year.

Aizawa was one of his favourite humans, and while that was certainly reason enough for him to be upset, Nezu suspected that no one with the possible exception of Recovery Girl knew how much the Principal had come to reply on the 1A teacher. Even disregarding the hours that Nezu had spent combing video footage, the internet in general, and various spy networks for his almost-protege, Nezu had significantly more work with regards to handling UA.

He refused to hire or train someone else to be his unofficial second until they found a body. It was a purely sentimental decision he didn’t quite want to logic away just yet.

“Zawa says you’re a hero,” rasped from the other side of the phone, voice almost breaking.

Nezu was too much a professional to gasp, but the temperature in the

room dropped at least six degrees. He was also too intelligent to not connect Zawa with Aizawa (the voice had used the *present* tense). Nezu also knew the voice was *young* and there was reason Nezu had chosen to work with children, for the most part.

“I am,” Nezu confirmed voice soft as he could manage. “Do you need a hero?”

The voice chuckled, and odd skipping sound that didn’t quite survive meeting the air. “No. Not really. I have Zawa already. And I rather think I can be a bit of my own hero, by now, to be honest. But we could use some help.”

“I see.” Nezu had placed his phone on his desk, the speaker mode not necessary with his hearing. He needed his hands free for his computer in order to call Nemuri and Yamada to his office, contact Tsukauchi and the other officers on Aizawa’s case, track the phone number, and summon a helicopter.

“You really don’t. Have you finished tracking the call yet? I’ve forgotten the building name and never actually knew the street address.”

Nezu’s paws didn’t falter. “Not quite yet. Is there a specific type of help you require? Medical?”

“No.” A pause. “Well. Yes.” A sigh. “Okay, we probably do, but neither of are going to handle that gracefully, at all. There were… experiments.”

Yamada and Nemuri arrived just in time to miss that comment, but catch their boss destroying his computer mouse. The doors had barely time to slam against the wall before Nezu was calmly pushing the cracked plastic aside and turning to his specialized laptop.

“I’ll see what I can do.”

“Shit, sorry. Didn’t mean to bring that up. But thanks. I suppose it makes sense to not want to stay somewhere that reminds us of the labs. It’s logical, though hardly practical. If we have to go the hospital, I suggest knocking us the fuck out.”

Nothing the child could have said would have made Nezu more certain that they actually knew Aizawa. The way Hizashi stiffened and Nemuri latched onto the blond’s arm at the word ‘logical’ proved they were of similar opinion.

“That would be feasible if necessary; Midnight will be on site as soon as possible.”

Another sharp breath. “Zawa would like that. Is Zashi-sorry, will Present Mic be there too? Zawa’s told me a lot about all of you.”

“Yes, absolutely, I will,” Hizashi claimed, stepping closer to Nezu’s desk and phone.

“Ah. Hello, Present Mic.”

Hizashi let out a choked breath. “Hi, Little Listener.”

The voice let out a low hum. “It’s been a very long time since I listened to your show. Not that I don’t like it! I do! You always cover really interesting points and are really supportive of issues like villainous classifications and quirk equality and I actually really loved it, and didn’t exactly choose to, um. Stop. Shit. I think I’ve actually gotten worse at talking to people.”

Partly because he wanted to keep the boy talking, partly to give the vary pale Hizashi a break, partly because he desperately wanted to know, Nezu interrupted.“Is there anyone else you need besides trusted medical personal?”

“Hmm. Heroes and a clean up crew. You might need to evacuate the building. I would. Contamination and all that. Biohazard crew in particular would be helpful. The labs need to be dismantled much more carefully than with general destruction, particularly because of the civilian businesses on the other levels that I’m pretty sure are innocent. They’ll need to be evacuated calmly in order to avoid a panic, so heroes specializing in crowd control would also be ideal. You know what, building inspectors as well, ones certified in disaster relief. There have been some major modifications and code violations that I’m not positive are structurally sound and, and I’m doing it again. Damnit.”

“If you’re referring to the mumbling,” Nezu said as he closed his laptop and stuffed it into the bag tucked under his desk, “then yes. The information was highly useful, however, so I encourage you to forgive yourself for whatever habit you feel you’ve failed to curb.”

“Ah, well. Thanks. Sounds like you’re moving? Got a location, then?”

“Yes. Midnight, Present Mic, and I are all heading to the helicopter now. There’s about an hour of travel time.”

“No rush. Not like an hour here or there’s going to change things at this point.”

“Kid,” Nemuri started.

“Ah. My name’s Midoriya. Midoriya Izuku. Probably should have led with that.”

Nezu closed his eyes a moment then turned back to his desktop computer, quickly attaching another customized mouse while staring intently at the screen.

“Midoriya, is Shouta, is Aizawa-“

“Alright? No. Not really. But he’s alive and looking forward to seeing you, even if he won’t admit it, the grumpy pants.”

Hizashi sobbed a laugh even as Nemuri dug apple-red nails into her palms. “Then why isn’t he the one calling?”

“We didn’t have a phone and I’m a better pickpocket. See you soon, heroes.”

“Boss?” Nemuri’s soft call drew Hizashi’s attention from where he’d been about to step forward and grab the phone.

“Midoriya Izuku was thirteen years old when he disappeared. He was last seen on a Friday.” Nezu grimly told his computer.

“The same one as Shou?”

“As near as police can tell.” Nezu climbed up to Hizashi’s shoulders so the man could use his long stride to get them to the roof just that bit faster. “Not they could tell much, since the report was apparently filed over a month later.”

“What?” Nemuri was outraged. “A kid goes missing and it takes someone a month to notice?!”

Nezu shook his head. “His mother noticed. It took her a month to find an officer who cared enough to file a report. Midoriya Izuku is quirkless.”

“We’ll be vigilantes if we do this.”

“Hm.”

“Are, are you okay with that?”

“Problem Child, I’m an underground hero. I’ve worked with vigilantes. Some days I’ve been a step away from being one. You’re the one who’d made it to the Top Ten. Are you okay with that?”

“I’ve thought about it before, being a vigilante. After All Might told me I couldn’t be a quirkless hero, I was mostly heartbroken, but there was a little thought worming it’s way through. I thought about that worm later, after I had One for All, whether I would have followed that thought to vigilantism, and I’m still not sure.”

“All Might said what.”

“Relax, Zawa, it was literal ages ago. Besides, it’s hard to hate a man who spent the remainder of his life making up for it.”

“…Harder to give up on being the Number One Hero.”

“Fuck, you’re not giving up on that, are you? Yes, it will be hard. But I’m not getting One for All back. No, don’t interrupt. I could, yeah, probably. I know Yagi well enough. But I can’t use One for All like it’s meant to be used anymore. I’m too broken after watching All for One win, too afraid of being seen after spending literal years in hiding, too certain that I’ve already failed once. And while I know you’ll tell me I didn’t fail, I did. We all did. Society ended and everyone we loved died and it took slow, painful years. Besides, our story’s going to have holes Zawa, holes that will only be filled by the ability to claim ’trauma’ and have people not look too closely. One for All is literally the opposite of subtle and I can’t be that kind of daylight hero anymore… one like you, maybe.”

“…You are, have been, and will be a better hero than me, Problem Child. Aw, shit, no, kid. Kid, society actually ended, where the hell do you keep finding more tears?”

The boy who met the heros at the building’s entrance was both unobtrusive and exceedingly obviously the kid they were looking to find.

He was gaunt, all skin and bones under a long stringy coat flecked with brown and green. He matched the dull stone bench he was sitting on all too well, except for his eyes. One eye was a bright emerald, brighter than the trees in their small fenced gardens, while the other had been tugged a murky white by a gash running from his eyebrow to the centre of his cheek.

The kid, Midoriya Izuku, smiled at the heroes as the group of five approached. “Hawks and Miruko. I mention that we didn’t really need fighters and they send me two of the best! Two who’ll be breaking into the top ten any month now and aren’t even from around here.”

“Aw, thanks kid! But we don’t just fight, ya know! A good hero does all sorts of things.” Miruko bounced on her heels.

Hawks stepped slightly forward to block Miruko and some of her energy, eyes cautious as he watched the kid.

Izuku simply nodded his green head. “Fair enough.” He smiled gently at Hawks in thanks before it shifted to a tired smirk when aimed at Miruko. “I did ask for trusted.”

“We were already here, kid, just on another case.” Hawks spoke slowly, watching the kid’s eye dart around and the tense set to his shoulders. Something told him that if the kid spooked and fled, five heroes wouldn’t be enough to catch him.

“Ah. The disappearances.” Midoriya ignored the heroes tensing as he stood up, rather shakily but with an odd sort of dignity. “Yes, you’ll find those answers here, too.”

“Look kid,” one of the area’s heroes, a tank of a man called Force Construct, reached out to grab Midoriya by one boney shoulder.

The move Midoriya made in response was almost a flinch, except far too smooth. It almost appeared as if the kid had never been in range at all, except for Midoriya’s scowl.

Midoriya tucked his hands in tattered pockets and stared the much taller man down with one focused eye. “I’d rather you didn’t do that.”

Force Construct blusterd. “You need to come with us and answer some questions.”

“No.”

“What?” The giant man took a step forward and Hawks found himself mirroring the motion, just going a bit wider so he was half in front of the kid.

“No. I don’t believe those are your orders and even if they were, my answer would be no. I think there are enough civilians here to cause a stir and some truly bad publicity if I started shouting and some heroes were seen hauling my scrappy and broken ass away against my will.” He held up thin wrists with prominent bones that were blanketed in scars. “You want your answers you’ll come with me, though I warn you: it won’t be pretty.”

He turned and walked away, ducking into the building before a single hero moved.

When they did move, the heroes followed him. Most of them didn’t know why they followed him. (Hawks followed because he had see those eyes in the mirror when he was younger, and it was everything he’d become a hero to stop. Miruko followed because while she didn’t like following as a rule, she could still recognize true leaders when she saw them, and for this kid to have those skills this early, something had gone *wrong)*.

They made it past the receptionist and down three flights of stairs before someone tried to stop them. A woman at a polished desk smile politely when they stepped out of the stairwell and told them there were no visitors allowed at this time.

“But I came from there.” Midoriya pointed down a perfectly clean hallway whose fluorescent lights seemed suddenly sinister.

“No one comes from there.”

“Yes, I know.” Midoriya smiled serenely and didn’t even flinch when a long-fingered hand reached out towards his face. Hawks flinched. He pinned the woman to the wall with several of his feathers and thought it a job well done.

Miruko clearly agreed, since she followed up with a quick jab to the neck that had the receptionist out cold.

Force Construct and the other heroes shifted uneasily, but one sideways look from a glacial green eye had them frozen in their tracks.

“Hm. Perhaps fighters were a good idea after all. This way.”

They, naturally, proceeded down the creepy hallway. The creepy factor didn't improve as they went through a series of doors. The only thing that improved, in fact, was the darkness and the mustiness. As in, the darkened and the mustiness increased, drastically, and took on a coldly sharp edge.

Miruko and Hawks traded looks and subtly adjusted their stances to back each other up, prompting the others to do the same.

Midoriya just kept walking forward, hands loosely clasped behind his back. The boy also hummed very quietly, which had the heroes tensing further (though not as much as if they could have heard the mumbles that slipped out between notes about their quirks, strengths, and weakness).

The smell was the first thing that upped the scales from creepy to wrong-bad-awful-*leave.* Dry rot, old blood, stockpiled refuse, and sharp chemicals rarely make for happy stories.

It was slight at first, growing and twining from mustiness into something that had Miruko burrowing her nose in her costume's ruff. By the time Midoriya had led them to a pair of double doors with empty windows all five heroes were wincing.

Midoriya stopped and turned to look back at the group, staring a moment as he took in their hunched postures and tight faces. "Ah. I'd forgotten." He drew a small piece of serrated metal out of a pocket and cut off five strips of his already tattered coat before handing them to the heroes. "It's about to get worse."

The three local heroes snubbed the option, but Hawks and Miruko took theirs gratefully, though not without a surreptitious check to make sure the scraps didn't have any obvious and suspicious stains.

"Mind the broken glass. There's rather a lot of it." Midoriya let the remaining rags fall to the floor as he pushed his way through the doors, stumbling a bit when one got caught and the kid had to put his shoulder into his attempt to force his way into the room.

He ignored the monster corpses once through, including the beaked thing that had been blocking the door.

The heroes didn't have the same luxury, though to be fair, the corpses were everywhere.

Despite the pervasive smell of rot, the corpses all appeared fresh, even

if most were in multiple pieces. There were arms and torsos and heads littering the ground amidst the broken shards of glass and shattered test tubes, if cylinders the size of elevators could be considered test tubes.

Midoriya walked a path through the corpses, casually stepping over the thin black leg of something with talons, in order to approach the center of the lab.

At the center there was a man sitting on the steps of a low dais. His eyes were closed but he seemed unbothered by the corpse lying right next to him, even though it was the only body both visibly human and unidentifiable by means of decomposition instead of mutilation.

Hawks hadn't gone to UA and nether had Miruko, but both had worked with the Eraserhead before. The man was frequently called in on raids with unknown quirks involved or when dealing with criminal activity such as trafficking.

This man had Eraserhead's tired posture and dark clothes, but he also had a gauntness to his frame and brittleness to his bones that made him almost unrecognizable. Certainly unapproachable.

Midoriya clearly didn't care.

"Heya, Eraser. Any of them move?" Midoriya's voice had a warmth to it that been previously so very absent.

"Two-"

A large hand suddenly reached for the tall, thin hero who'd been lurking at the back of their group, using Force Construct as a shield. Hawks caught the motion from the corner of his eyes, wings rising even as the sheer idiocy of the hero poking one of the downed bodies with his staff without even asking for a situational report registered.

Eraserhead's eyes snapped open as Midoriya moved before any of the heroes did more than tense. The boy had pulled out a pipe, ostensibly from the same impossible pocket or coat dimension as the previous shard of metal, and beheaded the thing.

With a pipe.

"Three." Eraserhead didn't react further other than closing his eyes, obscuring burning red and letting lanky hair fall.

Izuku hummed, walking around the monster he'd downed before driving the pipe through the things skull and wedging it into the ground. He then walked right up to Eraserhead and sunk to the ground by his side, ignoring the puddle that was too green to be blood, and nuzzling in while latching onto Eraserhead's arm.

Eraserhead simply lowered his head until his cheek pressed down onto dirty, wild, green hair.

"Shit." Miruko's voice was surprisingly soft. "Just shit. We need to get you both to a hospital."

Both figures flinched, Eraserhead digging his head more firmly into Midoriya's skull.

"No," Eraserhead rasped. "No. What you need to do is a sweep of this room and make sure they're all dead."

"Beheading works!" Midoriya's smile was not quite as creepy as the room, but really only needed a little practice to get there.

"Hey, no problem." The third local hero lit her hand on fire, only to have it splutter and die under the weight of a red glare.

"No." Midoriya's voice had lost any of the warmth he'd gained when rejoining Eraserhead. He swept his free hand in a tada gesture, inviting the heroes to take another look at the corpses.

"Here's your crash course on the Nomu; they have multiple quirks, all stolen; they have physical modifications that make them difficult to kill; they can occasionally still function even if in pieces; their first, second, and third instinct, without direction," Midoriya's eyes slid for a moment to the unidentifiable yet still human corpse next to the dais, "is to attack; and they were once human. Which is why you can't burn them. We need the bodies somewhat intact for DNA."

There was a long silence before Eraserhead sighed, cracking one red eye open and staring over the shoulders of the assembled heroes. "Congratulations on finding your missing people."

"Ready, Zawa?"

“What do we have left to loose?”

“…”

“Problem Child?”

“You. I could loose you. I really don’t want that. I don’t think, I don’t think I’d handle that well.”

“Then don’t.”

“Haha. Right. Okay. Just so you know, I’ve decided we’re time travelling while hugging. Haha. You don’t get to let go now.”

“…Never.”

Eraserhead and Midoriya refused to be moved, not that the first-responding heroes tried very hard. Hawks removed his coat and draped it over Midoriya before heading off to discover if his feathers were sufficient for beheadings. The kid’s stare was somewhat confused, but Hawks still had the sense that he’d somehow won the enteral gratitude of the closed-eyed Eraserhead.

Miruko, on the other hand, earned Midoriya’s eternal gratitude by giving the kid her gloves with a gesture that indicated he should get Eraserhead’s trembling fingers in them, somehow. It wasn’t clear whether the trembles were from cold or shock or exhaustion, just like it wasn’t clear through the bandages just how recent the underground heroes missing fingers were, but she figured it couldn’t hurt.

She didn’t stick around to watch the kid succeed or to help coordinate the (puking) locals, but instead sped back through the corridor to check on that backup and deliver them down. Quickly.

So Midoriya and Eraserhead sat on that dais in that puddle as the lab slowly filled with heroes, hazmat, and other sundry officials. The only time they moved was when Midnight and Present Mic came running in, and that was an eerie turn of both their heads to the door with only Midoriya actually bothering to open his eyes.

The two heroes stuttered to the briefest of halts before focusing on Eraserhead and launching themselves around and through the chaos

with the ease only granted to very experienced pros.

Midoriya shifted and put his palms on the ground, but changed his mind with a blind tug on his elbow from Eraserhead. He slid forward on the steps until he was leaning against Eraserhead's shins, allowing Midnight and Present Mic to bracket Eraserhead on either side.

They were professionals and long time friends of Aizawa Shouta, however, so didn't immediately latch on, despite the way Hizashi slammed to his knees and Nemuri's hands shook.

"Shouta, oh Shouta." Eraserhead held out a hand that Nemuri latched onto with all ten fingers, lowering her head until it rested on his shoulder.

Hizashi was caught, tears running down in his face, by a scrap of long, thin fabric sitting across Shouta's knees.

Shouta still hadn't looked at them.

Hizashi raised a trembling hand to Shouta's cheek, breath punching out of the Voice Hero when he felt paper-thin skin chase the touch.

"You can't turn it off, can you?"

Shouta's breath hitched at the soft question. "No, no Zashi. They took Erasure and Zuku got it back but they returned it *wrong."* His voice was a harsh barking rasp.

*"*Okay. Okay, Shou. I've got you." Hizashi kept murmuring words, hoping they were mildly comforting since he couldn't really think much beyond the feel of Shouta's clammy forehead against his own.

Nezu's approach was slower, more measured, the Principal unable to do anything other than take the full scope of the room he was walking through. He only stopped when he made it to the four heroes on the stairs (because Midoriya Izuku was a hero; Nezu had caught that bit about Izuku saving Aizawa's quirk, had caught the fact that Aizawa's clinginess was protective but also trusting, had caught the way the boy watched everything with a rigid wariness and an intent to handle whatever came their way).

Nezu placed one paw on Aizawa's knee and one on Midoriya's, meeting the kid's gaze squarely. "I'm sorry you had to endure this, Midoriya."

Midoriya watched Nezu right back, staring with his one eye in a manner that some heroes thrice his age couldn't manage. "Thank you, Principal Nezu."

Nezu simply nodded. He removed both hands to reach into his bag and tug out a long, thin piece of material that he gently dropped in Shouta's lap.

They sat like that for hours. Izuku leant against Shouta's shins, Nemuri's hand on Izuku's shoulder, and Hizashi's hand pressed tight to Izuku's palm (both heroes hearts had hurt when the boy had turned wondering eyes to them at their initial offer of contact).

Shouta leant against Nemuri and Hizashi, who sat on either side and held him up with arms looped around his back (capture weapon looped around his neck, loosely, but familiarly, the weight settling into his bones with the slowly permeating knowledge that his family was alive and safe).

Nezu leant against Izuku's chest, letting the boy slowly wind an arm around the animal and press a tired head into Nezu's fur (the warmth was bracing for Nezu who knew this wasn't his nightmare, but loathed the similarities, and was going to make sure someone burned for forcing him back into a lab to reach his people).

They sat until the last Nomu had been confirmed dead and Nezu signalled Nemuri. She slowly withdrew her hands from both Shouta and Izuku, feeling the weight of their regard as she tore her costume on the sleeve and knocked the two survivors out cold.

They drooped into each other, and Hizashi let out a low keen as he shifted to catch their weight.

"They need a hospital." Nemuri's voice rasped after hours of disuse.

"They do." Nezu hopped down. "Recovery Girl will meet us there."

"I don't think they have much stamina left for her to use for healing." Hizashi spoke as he helped drape Izuku over Nemuri's back. She had no trouble lifting the child, something Hizashi found himself replicating as he lifted a very light Shouta and cradled the man to his chest.

Nezu sighed as he led the way, heroes and workers parting neatly for him.

“No, I imagine not. Many of their injuries look long healed, as well. The hospital is primarily to ensure we limit the possibility of long-term damage from malnutrition or something improperly healed.”

Hizashi and Nemuri both made noises of assent as they focused on getting them out of the goddamn building.

Nezu looked back at the two sleeping heroes, watching the sunlight bring additional marks and scars to light. “Time might be the best healer for them, I’m afraid.”

“Fucking ow, Problem Child.”

“…”

“Pardon?”

“You were late, Zawa. Late.”

“Shit, how long were you here alone, Deku?”

“One month.”

“Shit.”

“Don’t struggle, Zawa. I get at least five minutes of hugs for spending a month thinking I’d time travelled alone.”

“Fine, fine. Can we at least move to the couch so we can plan as I get smothered?”

“Sure, old man, whatever your aching joints need. ”

“…I legitimately can’t remember the last time I felt this little pain.”

“I know, right?! So. Um. Did you see them?”

“No.”

“Zawa!”

“No, Problem Child. You were right about trauma and holes in the story. If I saw them I’d break the fuck down and Zashi and I weren’t-aren’t even

together at this point. I texted him, and Nemuri and even Nezu. I got responses and confirmed they're alive, and now I'm gong to break their hearts to ensure they stay that way."

"Okay."

"Okay?"

"Yes, Zawa. Okay. Bakugou hasn't had his wake up call and I don't exactly have any friends yet and my mom, well. I'm not going through what you are. And we're going to save them this time."

"We're going to save them all, Problem Child."

Finished Projects

Chapter Summary

> Izuku and Aizawa are productive in the year they're missing. There are many schemes.

Chapter Notes

> Here's a look at what Aizawa and Izuku changed. The next two chapters will be full of family comfort and happy beginnings.

All for One disappeared on a Wednesday.

No one noticed for over a week. That was the thing about being a megalomaniacal villain with a vast network and plans built in an interconnected web too complicated for others to follow; you were isolated. No one ever stopped by for tea.

All for One's various projects were in full swing and didn't need constant oversight, which he didn't generally supply since he saw no need for his minions to get lazy. It was easy, then, for Izuku to hack into the man's various accounts and answer the occasional question or field the occasional problem.

It was even easier for Slate, All for One's newest protege. Slate was believed when he said All for One was unavailable due to a mysterious project. Slate was trusted when he offered to pass along important messages.

It had taken Izuku six months to build his reputation as Slate and get close enough to have a shot. Six months of letting All for One believe he'd convinced the desperate quirkless child (the perfect receptacle) that the only salvation was through All for One.

And shit, enduring six months of grooming, even with an adult mind, shed new, unflattering light on the Shigaraki's situation. Izuku still wanted to punch Shigaraki in the face and a shitty upbringing didn't exactly excuse the absolute Villain Sigiraki had become, but All for One was intimidating, imposing, abusive, and fucking convincing. An abandoned, traumatized kid whose own quirk was highly self-harming, at least situationally, hadn't stood a chance with someone like All for One orchestrating their coming of age.

Slate had earned a quirk at six months. He'd earned his *reward.* He'd been good, he'd been smart, he'd been one of a tiny handful of people who were able to work around a new vigilante with a tentacle-like quirk and an axe to grind (it wasn't that hard when you were both the one feeding said vigilante information and the one spreading ridiculous rumours about said vigilante's quirk).

Another thing about being a megalomaniac was that arrogance was a requirement. No matter how careful All for One was, he always believed he was better. He never even entertained the thought that this tiny broken child about to be given everything he'd ever wanted would throw away the chance at a quirk and instead stick a knife in the gift-giver's windpipe.

And his skull, heart, lungs, and gut. All for One did have multiple defensive quirks, after all, and though Aizawa's strategically timed Erasure of every last one of them was perfect, Izuku wanted to be thorough.

They were thorough about his organization as well. Aizawa had been vicious in his takedown of middlemen and underlings and Izuku had all the information on everyone else. They handled those they could, implicated those they couldn't, and sent out a staggering number of police tip-offs.

All for One's corpse (eventually burned beyond all recognition with ashes literally flushed down two toilets, tossed in three garbage dumps, and sunk in the ocean) and the hollow echoes of his organization were much better rewards than a quirk. They didn't remove the rows upon rows of graves that lived in Izuku's mind and weighted down Aizawa's bones, but they were *rewarding.*

"We're planning a murder."

"A successful one, yes…is that, you were a hero longer than me, Zawa, I-"

"Calm down, Problem Child. I've killed before in fights, this isn't that different. All for One escaped three separate prisons; this is the best option. You're the one doing it, though."

"I'm really not as bothered as I possibly should be. He killed over half our class personally, not to mention what he did to All Might. I know we need

to be careful about revenge, particularly for crimes that haven't been committed yet, but yeah. Not worried about this one."

"Okay."

"Thanks, Zawa. And technically we're planning two murders. I'll leave the Doctor to you."

"…appreciated."

"Yeah. No more Nomus we know."

"No more Nomus at all."

"Right, yeah. Shigaraki's different though, isn't he, Zawa?"

"Yeah, he's a kid. Barely, but he is."

"Right, Dadzawa. The League of Villains was initially made of vigilantes and broken people, people I could have been. We'll need a different plan for them."

Torino Sorahiko stood in his doorway and stared, senile persona flummoxed right out of him for the first time in years.

A man was hogtied on his stoop. Torino could see greyish hair and worn boots and very little else besides a thick black binding that wound itself from the man's knees to his neck.

Beside the captive stood a smaller man in a dark hood. Torino could tell from long experience that the figure was young, probably too young, and slightly frail. His stance was all strength, though. Torino would still probably win in a contest of speed, yet he didn't think that he'd get close enough to keep the lead. This figure was slippery; he was the kind who'd walk into a shadow and just disappear.

"Gran Torino. This is Shimura Tenko." Torino flinched and the figure nodded. "Yes, that Shimura. Shimura Nana's grandson. He has been abused, blamed for his own extreme quirk disconnect, abandoned, and *groomed* by All for One."

"All for One is dead?" The words punched out of Tornio as if powered by his quirk.

“Yes, he is.” The figure’s head tilted. “Now. This kid is a villain, one with the potential to be very good at his job. His also an abuse victim multiple times over suffering from terrible mental illness and has just discovered how badly he’s been betrayed by the one person he thought he could trust.”

Torino blinked, surprised at himself as he let the figure in the hoodie step closer, suddenly able to make out vibrant green eyes over the scarf wrapped tightly around the kid’s lower face.

“This is not your *fault* Sorahiko, but it is your *responsibility*. Shimura Nana made a decision that had terrible impacts despite her intentions. You watched her do it. Her grandson needs therapy at the very least, possibly hospitalization, but mostly, he needs a hero. Be that hero.”

“How do you know all this?”

The kid cocked his head to the other side. “All for One destroyed many lives. Is it really so surprising someone finally came for him?”

Torino opened his mouth to say something, anything, but the man on the ground, *Shimura,* groaned and the kid’s head whipped towards him. The kid crouched down on the cold ground, holding himself up with one hand and placing the other on Shimura Tenko’s head.

“Your answer, Torino. Will you be his hero?”

“What will you do if I say no?” Tornio asked, his voice softer than it had been in years.

The kid looked away. “Fuck if I know.”

Torino knew that to be lie. Knew down to his aching joints that there were back up plans, probably multiple ones, but that they just weren’t as good. He also knew it didn’t matter, not really. He couldn’t let down his old friend, not again. Couldn’t let down *Toshinori,* who had never quite figured out the difference between fault and responsibility.

“Yeah, well, good thing we won’t have to find out.”

The kid smiled at him and even though Torino couldn’t really see it beneath the scarf and hood, he still felt like morning had come early and sunshine was warming his bones.

“Good.” The kid shifted his weight, running his hand through lanky hair. “Tenko, Tenko, come on. Wake up, Tenko. That’s it.”

“Slate?”

“Yup!

“What happened?” Shimura wiggled, apparently realizing his confinement. “You little shit. Gonna disintegrate your face. Was this necessary?”

“Yes. You were panicking.”

Shimura stilled, remembering what had started the original panic. There was something in voice, a cousin to both tears and rage, when he asked, “Sensei?”

“Was a megalomaniacal asshole who rescued you only to turn you into one of his backup plans. You were going to get stronger so you could be his puppet, your own desires and consent be damned.”

Shimura was quiet until Slate flicked him in the forehead. “None of that. I can see the rage building. You need help, Tenko, you deserve someone on you side for once.”

“And that’s you, I suppose.”

“Fuck no. I have so much work to do bringing Sensei’s empire to it’s knees. Not to mention how fucked up I am. I’ve got my own abandonment issues and latent trauma to work though, thanks. You deserve better than me.”

Shimura paused as he digested this, before letting out an almost tentative, “Kurogi?”

“Ah.” Slate drooped, both hands dropping to hang beneath his knees. “Gone. An old friend came and brought him to a better place.”

“So he’d dead.”

“Yeah, but Tenko, he was a Nomu. One of the first. He was in so much pain. He couldn’t really look after anyone beyond orders.” Slate shook his head, then waved his hand in Torino’s direction. “Hence, Torino!”

Shimura craned his neck along the pavement to try and look behind him. “Who the fuck is that?”

“Your grandmother’s best friend. He had no idea about your situation and is very sorry and will spend the rest of his days making up for it.”

Torino and Shimura stared at each other for a long moment, only interrupted when Slate gave a pat to Shimura's cocoon. "I've placed a device in your pocket with further proof of Sensei's general dickery and plans to twist you into his newest suit. Check it or don't, your prerogative. Ta for now!"

Before either man could blink, Slate had vaulted upright and kicked off the Torino's wall to launch himself up to a window ledge and the over the rooftop. The entire maneuver was as quiet as graves.

"I am so confused." Torino tucked his hands into his pockets.

Shimura snorted. "Makes two of us, old man. Think that might just be Slate."

"Right. Who is Slate, exactly?"

"Sensei's other apprentice. And probably murderer." They stared at each other again, Shimura's neck at an uncomfortable angle.

Torino sighed. "Gonna let me see that device?"

"Gonna untie me?" Shimura gave a twitch that was probably involuntary.

"Seems like a fair trade. Promise not to disintegrate my face or my furniture and I'll even throw in a meal."

"So, Zawa. Speaking of plans. I met Endeavour today."

"What."

"Endeavor. Number Two Hero. Obnoxious flame beard. Destructive tendencies that show up both in public and at home- ack. Stop that, watch those hands. Zawa, I'm fine. By 'met' I meant 'watched from afar.' I'm not burned. Promise. You act like I didn't learn my surveillance skills from you."

"Hm. You act like I'm unaware of your trouble-finding tendencies, Problem Child."

"You know, after the time-travel thing, I can't even argue."

“Good. So. Endeavor.”

“Yeah, I know we don’t have time to deal with him personally-“

“-but he does need to be dealt with. I agree, Problem Child. I don’t like Todoroki being left with that man.”

“Of course you don’t, Dadzawa. Hmm.”

“Crap.”

“What?”

“That’s the face you make when thinking over things you learned during your internship with Nezu.”

“His lessons about destroying institutions and icons have been particularly helpful lately. Wait, you were his student, too! You have the same face!”

“Which is why I know to be scared.”

“Not as scared as Endeavor’s gonna be.”

Endeavour fate was sealed on a Thursday almost four months after Eraserhead disappeared. The two situations were not connected in any way, excepting for the large reserves of anger Nezu had to burn from being unable to find his wayward teacher and the fact that a child-abusing national icon was an excellent target.

Nezu was first alerted to this opportunity by a file folder. The folder was nondescript, the kind you can find at any stationary shop and most discount stores. It was also a vivid green that could only be described as snot-coloured and bursting at seams that were held together by spite and an elastic.

The folder had been waiting for Nezu with the manager of his favourite tea shop. Nezu was immediately intrigued; he’d never actually told anyone this particular hole-in-the-wall-restaurant was his favourite and the staff were very discreet. They actually apologized profusely for the whole situation, having no idea how the folder had shown up, just finding it on the desk in their tiny office.

Nezu opened the file and was immediately enthralled. The first page

was a picture of Endeavour with a black marker moustache and angry eyebrows. The second was a petition from social media several years ago asking for Endeavour to be controlled or removed from Hero work entirely. The third was a completely confidential and supposedly unknown record for the failed police case that was inspired by the previous petition.

The fourth was a note: *They should have asked you. We're asking you.*

There were police reports filed by citizens and bystanders against Endeavour. Hospital recored for citizens, bystanders, and *villains.* Testimonials from police and responders. Analysis of Endeavour's rescue vs. Takedown numbers. Consolidations of damage reports. Cross-references against other Top Ten heroes going back decades. Cross-references against other heroes with unwieldy quirks. Cross-references against heroes in other countries.

There were graphs, charts, lists, diagrams, timelines, and tabs that linked back to other documents in the folder. It was *beautiful.*

The last two paper-clipped bundles were the heavy hitters. One was a collection of hospital records for the Todoroki family detailing a horrific number of burns. There was also a record of institutionalization for Todoroki Rei and a print out of the law surrounding quirk marriages.

The other was a Missing Persons Report, never officially filed, filled out by one Todoroki Fuyumi in shakey pink pencil crayon. Scrawled in sharp script the same as the earlier note was the address of a homeless shelter in a rather rough part of town.

Nezu closed the folder and opened his laptop. He didn't leave the shop for eight hours.

When he left, it was to meet Ectoplasm in his full hero gear waiting by a car.

"Principal Nezu."

"Ectoplasm! Excellent timing! Thank you for meeting me!"

"You're welcome. Can I ask for more details as to what this is about?"

"Of course, of course. In the car though, we have somewhere to be."

Ectoplasm took the news that they were undertaking the second step

in a plan to annihilate the Number Two Hero quite well. The car barely swerved at all and he only took an extra handful of seconds at stoplights and stop signs.

“I just have one question,” Ectoplasm said with hands forcefully relaxed around the wheel.

“That’s much less than expected!” Nezu clapped his paws.

“Am I replacing Aizawa?”

Nezu let the silent sit for a minute, the rumble of the car’s engine quiet against the backdrop of the road. “Yes, you are. Aizawa is the person I would normally take with me on such tasks, partially due to his quirk, partially due to his underground status, and partially because I’m not unaware that the two of us share a dark and slightly sadistic joy in this kind of destruction that tends to make others uncomfortable. While I don’t particularly care about the comfort of most, my staff are a notable exception.”

Nezu turned and focused small eyes on the jacketed figure escorting him. “You are replacing Aizawa, but I’m not expecting you to be or act like him. Furthermore, you are not a random choice. You are the best choice for the current job.”

Ectoplasm flexed his knuckles. “I’m not the typical choice when it comes to dealing with children. Or young adults.”

“Hmm. I believe your persona, dark as it is, will be exactly what’s needed. Young adults who were once failed by heroes and society at large do not tend to fall at the feet of daylight heroes and powerful quirks.

The rest of the drive was filled with the sounds of the street and the flipping of pages as Nezu skimmed his file.

They were fortunate when they reached the homeless shelter, slightly battered car parked unobtrusively a few blocks down. It was far enough past dinner that the dining hall wasn’t particularly busy, though definitely occupied.

It was a matter of moments for Nezu to spot their quarry and slip onto the bench across from a young man with dark hair and several very serious burns.

The young man put his spoon down immediately to stare at Nezu,

scan Ectoplasm at Nezu's back, and scowl. "I didn't do nothing."

"I know!" Nezu chirped, even as his nose crinkled at the smell of the soup. He probably should have had something other than tea today.

"I'm not planning on doing anything, either." The young man smirked at them, crossing his arms over his chest in a manner that deliberately showed off the burns on his wrist.

"Now that's a shame, young Dabi. I was rather hoping you'd be doing a specific something."

"Oh?" Dabi's eyebrow's rose. "Heroes need something destroyed, then?"

"We do indeed." Nezu threw a modified and significantly thinner version of his folder on the table. "Any interest?"

Dabi stared at Nezu for a full minute, clearly asserting some kind of control, but also clearly unable to deny his curiosity. Every muscle in his body froze and tensed when he red the first page. His eyes darted up to Ectoplasm, the man having shifted when the paper started to smoke, before tracking back to Nezu.

"What. The. Hell."

"You obviously don't have to help, but I thought you might appreciate the opportunity to add a personal touch."

Dabi flipped through the folder more slowly, eyes constantly returning to Nezu's face and clasped hands. Until he got the final pages, which included the medical reports for Todoroki Rei and Todoroki Shouto, and his hands stilled.

With a sudden lurch that surprised both heroes, Dabi slammed the folder shut. Nezu didn't have time to even open his mouth to begin his pitch when a slight and quite young form with blond buns slammed into Dabi, wrapping her arms around his throat.

"Daaaaaaabi. Who're your friends?" She tilted her head. "Can I stab them?"

Dabi sighed, ignoring the heroes completely. "They're not my friends, but no. You can't. They're heroes, and what's the rule about heroes?"

"They're more trouble than they're worth." Toga pouted.

“Good girl.” Dabi patted her on the arm still wrapped around him in a strangle hold.

“What do they want, though?” She leaned into his back, never taking her eyes away from Ectoplasm, whom she’d engaged in a staring contest.

“My help in taking down my asshole of a father.”

“Oooooh. You gonna do it?”

“Haven’t decided.”

“Yes!” Toga jumped up to swing her arms and properly celebrate Ectoplasm looking away first. “What’s your problem, anyway, Ghostie?”

“You have very sharp teeth. A blood-related quirk, perhaps?” Neither Ectoplasm or Nezu failed to notice the way the other two tensed up, even as Toga’s smile grew sharper.

“What of it?”

Ectoplasm just nodded. “They reminded me of Vlad King, he has similar dentition.” At Toga’s confused look, Ectoplasm coughed. “Vlad King, the Blood Hero. We bonded over villainous perceptions when we worked at the same agency years ago.”

Dabi stared flatly. “You don’t have a villainous quirk.”

“No,” Ectoplasm said slowly, “But I have a creepy smile and have been using prosthetic legs since highschool.”

Toga dropped to the ground to peer under the table at said implants, while Dabi rolled his eyes to the ceiling and mumbles about tact. Toga ignored him as she bounced back up, using Dabi’s arm as a spring board. “They look sharp. Can you stab people with them?”

Dabi’s head thunked to the table, muffled slightly by the folder.

Ectoplasm gave the impression of blinking, even through his mask. He glanced at a grinning and unhelpful Nezu, before looking back at Toga. “Yes. They’re specifically designed for both smooth movement and rather vicious kicks.”

Toga pointed at Ectoplasm. “Ok. I’ll talk to you.” She then pointed to the table just slightly farther down the row. “But over there so I can

still see what's going on."

At a nod from Nezu, Ectoplasm agreed. "Alright. I'm not about to let the Principal out of my sight, either."

"I appreciate the concern, but I can handle myself quite well." Nezu grinned.

Ectoplasm stopped and stared at his boss. "Eraserhead was quite clear on you needing supervision on these little side missions of yours. Something about damage control. He might not be lurking in the staff room currently, but I'm not disappointing the man."

They moved off, Toga asking pointed question about prosthetics and how many people Ectoplasm had stabbed, leaving a sharp silence in their wake.

Dabi didn't open the folder again. "Eraserhead. That's the underground hero who's missing, right? The one who looked like a hobo, had a scarf-weapon-thing, and actually gave a shit about those of us on the fringe?"

Nezu didn't drop the stare, though his did let the approximation of a smile fall off his face. "Yes."

"He gave me a sandwich, once, and didn't shoo me away from a warm grate. You going to find him?"

"Yes."

Dabi stared at the teeth in Nezu's expression before nodding. "Alright. I'm in. What's the plan?"

"So quickly?" Nezu watched the man before him lean forward, left arm pick at the edge of the burn on his right.

"You've got blood in your teeth and rage in your eyes when you talk about your missing man." Dabi shrugged. "I see that expression plenty on the streets, not so much in heroes. But you're going to need a decent bloodlust to knock Endeavour to the ground."

Nezu leaned back. "We're not going to knock him to the ground. We're going to throw him to the ground, drown him in a puddle, douse him in dirt, scatter the ashes in the trash, and turn him into one part societal spectacle, one part hero reform, and two parts domestic abuse awareness campaign."

Dabi blinked. “I like you.”

“Excellent! We’re going to be seeing quite a lot of each other.”

“Did we plan for Nezu to take Dabi on as a student, Problem Child?”

“No. Are we upset that Nezu took Dabi on as a student?”

“…It’ll be good for them both.”

“Sure thing, Dadzawa. Now, how many knives do you think I can fit in my hiking boots?”

“Six. Are you expecting knives to actually help us if we need to fight Gigantomachia in the mountains?”

“No, though the six backup plans we’ve got should be sufficient. Particularly since we’re just doing surveillance and letting the Pros handle both him and the Meta Liberation Army. But, worst come to worst, we’ve gone too far to not go down stabbing.”

“Fair enough.”

Nezu slowly sipped his tea, quietly glad that Rei still insisted on weekly teas despite the whole Endeavour business having wrapped up fairly neatly almost a month ago.

Prison had been a bit much to hope for with the man’s record, but the divorce had been almost painless and it’s not like Endeavour would ever be able to show his face in society again. The trick had been lining up the public’s perception like dominos crashing into the Hero Commission so hard that they were racing each other to disavow the Number Two hero (perhaps a snowball continuously growing as it rolled inexorably down hill would be a better example, if said snowball had been also set on fire and aimed for a town built on paper stilts).

The Hero Commission was, naturally, taking full credit for discovering and handling the corrupt hero in their midst, but Nezu had snuck in

several policies regarding accountability and standardized several checks and balances. He was content to call the whole kerfuffle a win.

And that was without considering the truly beautiful heights that Rei and Natsuo were taking the domestic abuse and mental health awareness campaigns. Nezu might even suggest a manager to handle the public appearance and the speaking jobs he knew Rei was interested in taking on, once he'd finished vetting the possibilities, of course.

Nezu had grown rather fond of her particular blend of chamomile tea.

"Mom!" Rei flinched when the door slammed, smiling gratefully at Nez as he steadied the teapot. She turned to look at her oldest son.

"Touya." Rei blinked at the slight form hiding behind her enraged son. "And friend. Welcome, dear."

"Ah, young Toga." Nezu patted the spot next to him. "Sit, sit. Join us for tea. And snacks."

Toga skirted Rei to collapse next to Nezu, stabbing a cookie with a pocket knife and lifting it up to munch on it's edge, eyes never leaving Touya or his mother. They both ignored the fact that she sat a little too close to the hero and that the hand holding the cookie, and thus the knife, trembled faintly.

Touya accreted his mother's hug quickly, but fiercely, before turning on his heel to pace. "Those shitty fuckers who call themselves Toga's foster family tried to sell her to traffickers. Traffickers!"

He turned and dug a file folder, neon purple with haphazard skulls and daisies drawn all over it, and slammed it down on the table, rattling the tea cups and releasing a faint waft of jasmine from the spilled liquid.

He turned to glare at Nezu. "I know we wanted to wait a few more weeks, but I think I got enough on her sperm-doner's shady dealings with faulty construction materials and I know I have enough on the embezzling. With the police report for the busted trafficking ring and the goodie-truth shoes Detective's testimony, we have to be able to move sooner."

Nezu pulled the folder over to him, even as Toga dropped her knife with a muffled clatter. The remainder of the cookie crumbled. "What."

Touya huffed and collapsed down beside Toga, cuffing her gently upside the head the moment he hit the ground. “Don’t be stupid. Wasn’t going to leave you behind if I was getting out.”

“Oh.” She stared at her knife a moment, before reaching out to grab Touya’s sleeve.

“Oh yes,” Nezu said as he flipped through the pages, “I do believe we can handle them right away. Good work Touya.”

Touya grinned, but anything else he might have said was cut off when Fuyumi, Natsuo, and Shouto rounded the corner, coming back from the yard where they’d been attempting to teach Shouto about fun with the help of a ball and some set of rules.

Fuyumi and Natsuo were poking fun at Shouto, who wasn’t smiling but wasn’t scowling either. Fuyumi was the one to stop her brothers, take in the tense postures and Toga grasping her brother’s sleeve. “What’s going on?”

“We’re adopting Toga, here. I assume one of you boys has the paperwork?” Rei raised an eyebrow at Touya and Nezu who looked at each other for a moment.

Touya reached over to the file of evidence that Nezu had been paging through and pulled a set of stapled documents from the back. He handled them to his mother, smug smirk on his face.

The expression fell when Nezu also handed Rei a document pulled from his vest.

“Damnit. I thought I had them all.”

“You did very well! Just forgot the formal hero recommendation form for immediate transfer.”

“Well.” Touya blinked. “Thanks.”

“Wait.” Fuyumi breathed. “I get a sister?”

Natsuo was studying Toga who was staring at him back, defiantly eating the cookie that Natsuo had left on his own plate as he reached for tea. “So. Toga. As in the Toga who had Touya here leaving multiple times after midnight, threatening to burn all the knives in the city to melted goo while stealing the charred bones of various idiots?”

“Yup.” Toga grinned, teeth in full display and cookie crumbs on her cheeks.

“Nice.” He held up his hand for a fist bump, which Toga gleefully returned, long sleeves of Touya’s sweater hiding most of her fist.

“Hey.” Touya protested.

Fuyumi ran her hand through Touya’s hair, making him swat at her and Shouta smirk slightly into his tea. “We love you, big brother, but you pretended to be dead for years. Even with your very legitimate reasons, you’re going to be in the dog house for a while. Now,” she physically waved her hands to brush off any defence Touya might manage. “To the important part. I’m getting a *sister?”*

Fuyumi, to her clear disappointment, got interrupted by Nezu’s phone ringing.

“Crap,” said Touya. “That’s the important heroic-shit ring.”

“It is indeed.” Nezu took several steps away from the family to take the call, mostly humming in response as he half-listened to Fuyumi and Toga both declaring they’d always wanted a sister and latching onto each other with an eagerness that had Touya resigned and Shouto baffled. Rei and Natsuo both looked absurdly pleased with the whole situation, though for different reasons.

“Anything interesting?” Touya eyed Nezu curiously as the principal came back but didn’t sit down.

“Quite! Apparently, some hikers were way out when one of them, possessing some sort of searching or surveillance quirk they said, located a giant man hiding in the woods. They left a detailed plan of his current location, a description that matches that of a dangerous villain active several years prior, and no contact information whatsoever. Local heroes have asked me to assist with a plan that ensures the villain doesn’t manage to escape yet again. Apparently, there’s been some other potential large-scale villain activity in the area that has the Commission all aflutter and worried about conflict and spooking targets.”

Touya’s eyes slide to where Toga and Fuyumi have their arms entwined and the back to Nezu. “Want company? It would be a shame to interrupt Ectoplasm’s day off and I know you like someone to scare off the idiots with stupid questions. Or stupid opinions.”

Nezu stared a Touya for a long moment before clapping his paws together. “Company would be lovely! Please don’t set the forest on fire without my express say so!”

“Sweet. You’re not denying it’s a possibility.”

Fuyumi pointed at the two of them. “If you get a day out so do we. Let’s go to lunch and welcome our new sister.”

“Oooh. Can we get dango? And get our hair done?” Toga bounced in her seat and clapped her own hands.

Rei smiled. “It’s been a long time since I’ve had a spa day.”

Natsuo groaned. “I have class this afternoon, but I’m down for lunch.”

“I’d like to go,” Shouto spoke quietly, but actually smiled when Toga gave a whoop and started shimmying him and the others out of their seats. She paused in the doorway and ran back to throw her arms around Touya in a hug that nearly cut off his air supply. She was out the door and yammering about what Shouto could do with his hair, short as it was, before Touya regained enough air to be able to speak.

Touya shook his head, still-dyed strands of hair flying wild, before turning to Nezu. “If I’m going to be your intimidation factor, I think I need a coat. Something long and dark that flairs dramatically.”

Nezu cackled.

“Side missions. So many side missions.”

“Don’t gripe, Problem Child. You had a fucking blast intimidating Hitoshi’s foster parents.”

“Well, yeah. Don’t think I don’t know about the care packages you’ve been sending to my baby classmates.”

“I wasn’t trying to hide them.”

“Liar. The cookbooks for quirks like Momo’s and Satou’s were a nice touch.”

“Thank you.”

“…Zawa? I’m kind of tired.”

“Me too, Problem Child. Me too.”

Aftermath

Chapter Summary

> Aizawa and Izuku are sprung from the hospital, but separately, which doesn't please either of them. Aizawa hides out at UA and realizes he's actually been missed, while Izuku runs into Hizashi and has one simple demand. There are also gifts and at least one hug.

Chapter Notes

> Hello! So this story grew a bit but should be done at five chapters. There will be more hugs next chapter, but I hope you enjoy the supportive UA staff and protective Inko.

Eraserhead disappeared on a Monday.

No one was surprised. Monday was almost two full days later than Hizashi had expected, one day later than Nemuri had hoped, and six days earlier than medical staff had advised.

Eraserhead had never liked hospitals, even before he'd started associating antiseptic and fluorescent lights with screams and pain (so much worse when they were Izuku's and not his own).

They'd taken Izuku from him, now. Of course they had. Shouta had no claim on the kid other than repeated trauma (so much more trauma than anyone suspected). Knowing that in no way made the separation easier.

Izuku's mother had checked him out on Friday. She was apparently fairly distraught, but also supremely distrustful of anything resembling the institution that didn't bother looking for her son.

Shouta almost wished he'd been able to witness the interview the police would have tried to run Izuku through. Shouta couldn't be less worried about the cover story, which was basically the truth with a screwed up time line.

He could practically hear the boy being ever so helpful while revealing nothing at all. Yes, they'd be taken by evil human experimenters. Yes, they'd spent a significant amount of time in their cells. Yes, they'd fought in the testing rings against the Nomu. Yes,

their escape was violent and bloody and more targeted at stopping the threat than simply getting away, but you weren't there, don't know what it was like, what we were up against, and I'd really like to see you do a better job please and thank you.

Shouta didn't have Izuku's gift with words, but he'd skated through his own interview with mostly one word answers and the occasional description painted in words as graphic as possible. His interview with two rapidly paling detectives hadn't lasted long.

The almost feral Nezu might've had something to do with the interview time, honestly. The Principal wasn't a physically violent hero, but there was a least one moment when Shouta would have sworn his boss was about to go for one of the detective's throats. The woman probably shouldn't have insinuated that Shouta had all but asked to be kidnapped (she was right, but it was still tacky; no one Shouta had trained would ever be so bumbling).

To be fair to the detectives, Nezu had already been furious when the interview started. He'd been smiling so amiably that Shouta would have been sweating if Nezu wasn't sitting on Shouta's hospital bed with his back to Shouta in one the clearest protective stances Shouta had ever seen.

Nezu had interrupted the police interview with Izuku the previous day, and the detectives hadn't been so much bumbling as downright offensive (Shouta couldn't decide whether he missed Tsukauchi or was glad this wasn't the highly competent man's jurisdiction). Nezu had enjoyed Midoryia Inko's anger immensely, arriving just in time to declare Izuku a hero and friend of UA for services rendered to one of their own, which naturally included funding of all present and future bills. Not just medical and therapeutic, but also legal.

Nezu had then, as he gleefully reported to Shouta after his own interviewers had been temporarily driven off, given a full report to Izuku's civilian mother. By the time Inko had checked out with a conscious but sleepy Izuku, she had the names of the heroes involved in the rescue, a play by play of Nezu's own role, a detailed character sketch of Shouta as a person and Eraserhead as a hero, the optics of the entire human experimentation ring her son had helped stop, and the complete scope of how thoroughly said ring had been erased from existence.

She wasn't happy. She was proud of her son, relieved there was no active threat, and livid on an institutional level, but she wasn't happy.

Shouta would have approved, if it wasn't for the itch crawling up his back screaming that he didn't know where Izuku was (nothing ever good happened when Izuku was gone; Shouta had let them take his son *again).*

But Shouta was fine. He was handling it. Poorly, sure, but handling it all the same.

The occasional looks of his fellow staff members seemed to suggest that they hadn't expected him to be handling it in the UA staff room, however. Which was fair enough, as Shouta had certainly spent so much time sleeping in this room that he probably hadn't sent too many signs that he actually quite liked the space.

It had big, bright windows for one. Large enough window sills to sit in for another. It also had a room full of people who *weren't dead.* Shouta might find it harder to remember the not dead thing if he went back to his apartment all alone. (He also couldn't remember the actual address of said apartment, as sure as he was that Hizashi or Nezu had maintained it, and couldn't decide whether one year's absence and some trauma were enough justification for forgetting what should have been his home.)

The staff room was better, regardless. The staff room was full of people he actually kind of cared about, who also happened to be professional enough to ask him no questions about his absence and the flattened criminal ring that accompanied his return. Or the missing fingers. Or the eyes that were currently covered with bandages filched from Recovery Girls' office.

They also didn't ask anything about why he was sitting in a windowsill with his sleeping bag around his shoulders (somebody had *washed* it recently enough that it smelt like fields and bubbles instead of time and dust) instead of curled on the couch.

Snipe kept giving Shouta coffee. Cementoss brought Shouta books to occupy his shaking hands. Ectoplasm gave Shouta gloves modified for said hands because apparently the man liked to sew. Thirteen gave Shouta a stuffed octopus that was fucking soft and tucked under his arm (so he'd remember to give it to Izuku later). Lunch Rush gave him small, continuous snacks that had absolutely been approved by Recovery Girl, who also sent gummies shaped like flowers. Vlad actually brought potted flowers, and while they weren't handed to Shouta or anything, they sat in the staff room where they'd never sat before and kept drawing Shouta's attention.

Nezu brought Shouta a file full of information on Izuku that Nezu probably shouldn't legally possess and Shouta didn't technically need, but appreciated immensely. Midnight gave Shouta space and touch, reading him with surprising ease and clambering right on up next to him on the window sill, shin pressed into his leg to remind him she was there. Hizashi gave Shouta whatever he fucking wanted, whenever Shouta gave even the slightest indication that he might want something.

And while this would normally irritate Shouta so damn much, it was nice. Pleasant. It was almost like they might have missed him this past year even half as much as Shouta had missed them. Their gestures eased an ache that had pressed like needle-sharp shards in his lungs, never a breath without remembering, back when everything had gone to shit and they'd all *died* (and left him and Izuku alone with the guilt and the knowledge and the pain).

But they weren't dead. They were here. And so was he.

Izuku wasn't.

Shouta took a shaky breath, feeling it whistle through his chest and settle in the tips of his remaining fingers. Nemuri responded by leaning her leg more heavily into his, gently, ready to pull back at a moments notice, but still firm.

He smiled at her. Or, well, he grimaced at his octopus, figuring Nemuri would know it was supposed to be a smile-adjacent and supposed to be directed at her.

He hadn't looked at anyone. Erasure was broken, the doctors had no clue and Recovery Girl had mentioned something about the lack of physical damage to be fixed. He simply couldn't turn Erasure off.

Shouta didn't particularly care, in some ways it was nice to have some physical manifestation of those shards that lingered in his chest, one for each of his students and one for each person in this damn room (shrunken, so much better with them *in the room*, but still there).

He just refused to take someone's quirk from them without cause, particularly not a friend. He knew how it felt, now, all emptiness rattling around his bones. While Izuku was adamant that Shouta's quirk didn't feel like loosing your quirk forever (Shouta hated that Izuku knew, even if Izuku had actually seemed to *settle* without a quirk buzzing, burning under his skin), Shouta still knew the feeling was disorienting.

He hadn't come back to cause his friends more grief. Even when they tried to sneak up on him.

"Power Loader."

"Eraser." Power Loader chuckled. "Eyes bound in cheap bandages and still scary observant. Glad some things never change. My footsteps give me away?"

Shouta leaned his head back until he felt cool glass on his ear. "Your costume clinks slightly when going through doors, Maijima."

"Ah. Welp. Sorry this is late, had some adjustments to make."

Shouta heard something be set down on the window ledge by his knee and felt Nemuri vibrating in place. He tilted his head. "Late? I haven't even been out of the hospital for six hours."

"Which is significantly better than expected. Vlad's out a staff take out order from losing the bet so badly." Maijima sounded very smug.

"He's always out early! He climbed out a window with a broken arm once! My bet was perfectly reasonable." Vlad continued to mutter from his desk closer to the door.

Nemuri snorted. "You bet he'd be out the next day. He didn't even wake up the next day."

"And Zashi threatened to sit on me." Shouta tilted his head towards the sound of Vlad being comforted half-heartedly by Thirteen.

"That little sneak!" Vlad smacked his hand down on the wood sharply. Shouta didn't flinch, but he thought that if he'd been any less tired he might have.

There was a second small thwack as Nemuri made a gesture and bumped her elbow against the window, accompanied by the faint wafting scent of lavender that she naturally carried due to her quirk. "He only made that threat after Shou woke up, so *after* you already lost the bet."

"Oi, if we can focus on the awesome gift I'm trying to give instead of Vlad's sore-loser tendencies, I'd appreciate it." Maijima had always been able to interject the perfect amount of implicit 'you fools' to his tone, possibly due to the fact that technically all of his kids could cause explosions and fires, regardless of quirk.

Shouta had always liked Maijima.

Shouta reached out to feel along the ledge before his hands bumped into a familiar shape. He slowly raised a hand to tug the cloth from his eyes, letting it sit around his forehead. He kept his gaze downwards, towards the gift and his own legs, as he slowly allowed red pupils to focus.

They weren't his googles, for all they were a similar shape and a similar colour (Hizashi's colour, though no one but his Problem Child had ever made that connection). They were heavier, with a thick tinted lens and a tiny lever on the right side directly before the frames turned into a strap that would wind about his head.

Nemuri bounced again and Shouta could hear Maijima's smirk. "Come on, try them."

He did, in part because he was curious, but mostly because Maijima was asking (none of his colleagues were ever to know how much he'd do for them, now, simply because they were alive enough to ask).

They were surprisingly soft around his eyes and tinted everything just a bit darker than he was used to, like wearing sunglasses inside.

"Excellent, they look like they fit," Maijima said, though he didn't step forward to test it like he would have a year ago. "Now, look at me."

"What?" Shouta whipped his head up, managing to look just over Maijima's shoulder at the the potted plant.

"Relax, Shouta. Remember those experiments we did?" There was an awkward pause where Shouta struggled to shift through memories of two life times and Maijima realized that probably wasn't the best question. "Um, look, or, shit. Okay. Well, I'm ninety percent sure that the material I made those lenses are will block your quirk."

Nemuri reached out, keeping her hands within the corner of his vision but not enough to really get caught in Erasure. Shouta still closed his eyes behind the goggles as her cool hands framed her face and branched over his cheeks. He let her tug his head around to face her more directly.

"Shou. Try on me, okay? Zashi's not hear to yell, and I've probably felt Erasure the most, okay? Just try, please?"

He took another rattling breath that he released through his nose

before opening his eyes.

“There you are.” Nemuri smiled softly, thumbs moving over his cheekbones.

He raised his hands to cover hers, drinking in her wild hair and bright blue eyes, then yawned as a puff of coloured air released from the back of her hand.

“See? All good.”

Shouta opened his mouth, to say what, he didn’t know, when Maijima interrupted, though softly. “There are moisture strips around the inner edges since I was kinda worried about the chronic dry eye and thought it might be worse with you not being able to turn your quirk off. I have little replenishing vials that hook right into the goggles, too. They’re mostly water right now, but I think Recovery Girl and I could could come up with something closer to your original medication. And, well. If you turn that lever up, the lenses switch so you can use Erasure and your student death-glare.”

Nemuri tilted her head and Shouta shook his own, really not wanting to test that bit right now.

“Oh! And the best bit, close your eyes and turn the lever down.”

Shouta hesitated for one heart beat than did so, releasing a huff when soft fabric unfolded and pressed against his lids.

“Better than the cheap bandages, huh? Again, worried about the dry eye issue, and well, comfort in general? So when you feel like going with closed eyes and taking a bit of a visual rest, I thought you’d best you have something a bit more comfortable and stable than random strips of cloth. And Part Two!”

Shouta toggled the switch so he could turn to face Maijima, the man’s smile just this side of smug as Shouta had expected. The support hero handed Shouta a cane that he’d been hiding loosely. It was slate grey and ordinary looking, though Shouta’s hand dropped a bit when the hefty weight settled across his palm.

“It’s pretty basic, though it does collapse down for when you’re not going blind and also extends out for when you need to whack a villain across the knees.”

Shouta ran both hands across the grooved metal cane, completely lost

for words other than thanks, yet, for some reason, also completely unable to force them out of his throat.

“Aw, come on. None of us had Part Two, that’s cheating,” Vlad moaned, head thunking to the table.

“It wasn’t a competition,” Nemuri stated firmly, though ruined it with a smile when Shouta laughed.

The sound was rusty and coated in dust, but it creaked out with enough force that Shouta found his back pressed against the glass. “Don’t be stupid, Nem. Of course it was a competition.”

He looked over his colleagues, taking in how similar yet how different they were from the figures in his memory, before letting a slow smirk cross his face. It was kind of gratifying to see that Snipe and Vlad both still flinched back at the sight.

“Thirteen won.” Shouta brought his (Izuku’s) octopus to sit on his knees as he spoke, fingers carding through the soft material.

“Yes!” The Space Hero punched the air, suitably pleased.

Vlad moaned again, but Maijima was the one who spoke. “Oi! Don’t count me out just yet!” He then place another small bundle on the windowsill, much to the consternation of the staff. Nemuri almost fell off her perch with laughter.

Shouta just stared at the bundle, a pale colour made grey by his new goggles. “When did you and Ectoplasm even have time to *make* me things?”

“Oh, right, Ectoplasm got the wool from me, too.”

“It’s still my gift!” Ectoplasm was quite emphatic from where he was beating Snipe in chess.

Maijima just waved the comment away. “Well, yeah, I just wanted to let him know that while your knitted gloves aren’t work kit, he could punch a mugger or dangle from a rooftop without worrying about them getting holes.”

“So long as it’s clear.” Ectoplasm pointed a rook at Maijima and Shouta was suddenly, viciously grateful for his new googles. He would have missed so much byplay only by listening to their voices. And he and Maijima hadn’t even truly bonded by enduring problem children

who liked explosions and had little understanding of personal safety yet.

“Yes, yes.” Maijima tried to turn back to Shouta and Nemuri, but Ectoplasm was having none of that.

“Don’t ‘yes, yes’ me Mr. Hides-in-Lab. I had to escort Nezu twice as much as the rest of you *put together.* I’ve seen things.”

“It can’t have been that bad,” interjected poor, innocent Thirteen.

“Yes it can.” Shouta and Ectoplasm spoke so in sync that it actually took a moment for everyone to realize that Shouta had spoken at all.

Shouta met Ectoplasm’s stare and nodded. “I suppose I should thank you for keeping Nezu from starting the Third Paper War.”

“It was *hard.* And that was with the Endeavor Distraction. Have you heard about Nezu’s new protege, yet? He’s worse.”

“Ah.” Shouta nodded and crossed his arms. “Todoroki Touya, yes.”

Snipe opened his mouth, ostensibly to ask how a man fresh out of the hospital knew that, when Ectoplasm jolted forward and covered his mouth.

“Don’t ask,” Ectoplasm hissed. “If I’ve learned anything, its that when one of *them* knows something they shouldn’t, you *don’t ask how they know.”*

“That seems excessive,” Maijima said as he watched Snipe throw Ectoplasm’s hand off and reach for his gun.

Shouta met Nemuri’s eyes and saw the glee and spark that had been hidden under worry and fear. He sighed, knowing he’d probably regret this but unable to stop himself. He coughed, making sure everyone, but particularly Ectoplasm, had their attention on Shouta.

“And how is Toga enjoying your sparring matches? It was so nice of you to take on your own protege despite your busy schedule.” Shouta made sure he didn’t smile after he spoke, but it was maybe a little difficult seeing how Nemuri had to restrain her giggles.

Shouta briefly thought he’d gone too far, since there really was no explanation for how he knew that particular fact (he and Izuku had been very thorough in their possibly overprotective safety measures).

The moment passed when Ectoplasm dropped his head to the table with a moan that did Vlad proud. Snipe wasn't in time to save most of the pieces on the chess board, mostly because he'd, correctly in Shouta's opinion, prioritized his coffee mug.

Snipe looked over the slumped form of his friend while cradling the mug to his chest. "Please focus on the gift before you give the poor fella a heart attack." Snipe suddenly frowned. "That wasn't a challenge, Eraser."

Shouta let out another chuckle before reaching back out to the fabric bundle sitting on the windowsill. He stilled, briefly, when he realized the bundle was the gift instead of hiding the gift.

Vlad laughed. "Think you might have gotten the measurement of his capture weapon wrong, Maijima."

"I did no such thing." Maijma sounded affronted.

Nemuri caught on first, aside from Shouta, who hadn't spoken as he wound the smaller capture weapon around his shoulders and wove it under the one Nezu had returned to him.

"It's for the *kid,"* she breathed.

"Yup. What?" Maijima asked the room at the confused reactions of his colleagues. "Eraser still checks up on the kids he's graduated, and you don't think he's going to keep this kid he literally went through hell with?"

Shouta didn't hear the replies, though he knew there were several. Damn fucking right Shouta was keeping the kid.

Izuku was *his* kid.

His kid who had twenty four hours to come and see Shouta, or *Nezu* was winning the contest because Shouta would use his folder for an address and make a damn house call.

"Hey, Zawa, I- Oh."

"Humph. So articulate, Problem Child."

“Shut up. Should we move? Will Vlad-sensei see us?”

“No. He’s always had a bit of a blind spot for things above. We’re fine on the roof, particularly if we don’t move.”

“Hm.”

“Oof. That wasn’t an invitation to use my back as a wall to lean against.”

“Hush, Zawa. You put up with it before, you can put up with it now that I’m an underweight kid. You know, I’ve never really understood the relationship between you and Vlad-sensei.”

“…like reluctantly fond brothers with little in common.”

“That’s hilarious. You mean all that time it wasn’t Class A against Class B, but rather their teachers that were competing? The things you learn.”

“I wasn’t competing against him, Problem Child.”

”No, but you already had father’s favour.”

“I’m deeply disturbed by you putting Nezu in the position of father for your scenario.”

“That wasn’t exactly a denial.”

“Hmph.”

“…This isn’t Vlad’s patrol route.”

“No.”

“A lot of the teachers have been taking extra and different shifts.”

“Yes.”

“Geez, Zawa. I thought we got past the monosyllables. I’m glad they care.”

“Yeah, me too, I supp- Shit. Snipe has much better situational awareness. Go. Now.”

Izuku almost cried when he saw Present Mic.

The man's death in the future that wasn't hadn't been as hard on Izuku as it was on Aizawa, but the man had been Zawa's partner. Meaning that Hizashi had absolutely jumped on board with the 'let's adopt most of 1A and especially the trouble-attracting Problem Child' train that Zawa denied ever starting.

So Izuku had still lost a father figure, and even if he hadn't gone to the edge of the end with that particular father figure that loss had hurt like hell. Or like a bone that had healed wrong but you still had to use, because there were people to save and nowhere to rest and just because it hurt in the rain or snow or fog didn't mean that it wasn't still functional.

(They didn't talk about how it felt to see Zashi's body as the base for a Nomu, or how Izuku felt when he fought it unprepared because being prepared would mean retreating and suiting up and telling Zawa, or how Zawa felt when he'd seen the Izuku covered in the dead Nomu-not-Zashi's blood.)

Hizashi, the living, breathing man, stood in the outside market where Izuku and his mom were grocery shopping, staring at a storefront with jelly pouches visible in the window. Izuku could just about see the struggle in the way the man swayed, long hair draping across his back. On the one hand, Zawa was probably on just as strict a health-building diet as Izuku was. On the other hand, Zawa's smiles were rare, precious things that were unfortunately more statistically likely with jelly pouches nearby.

Izuku watched the man deliberate, his own exhausted body shifting as he deliberated a different debate. On the one hand, his mom (his magnificent mom who'd nearly punched a doctor that refused to treat the useless quirkless kid at the hospital) was buying vegetables at the stall behind him. And Izuku was not comfortable letting her out of his sight at the moment. On the other hand, Present Mic. Hizashi. Not only would Hizashi lead Izuku to Zawa (and he wanted Zawa, Zawa was always there, how was he supposed to sleep without Zawa?), but Hizashi gave great hugs. Izuku really wanted a hug.

"Izuku, honey?" Inko ended Izuku's deliberation. Her soft words meant she was focusing on Izuku and not the vegetable vendor (she didn't want to let him out of her sight either) and so would follow him.

Hizashi had also turned at the name, small frown playing about his eyebrows. The frown disappeared the moment he realized that the

name of his best friend's kid (because Hizashi wasn't an idiot and that kid was now Shouta's, at least in part) wasn't just being uttered in passing.

Hizashi breathed in sharply when Izuku walked right into the man, hardly with any force but solidly, stopping only when his forehead hit the spiky little zipper of Hizashi's jacket.

Izuku vaguely heard his mom's own indrawn breath, but was too busy inhaling the scent of records and hair gel to really pay attention. He was a kid again; he deserved some comfort.

"Hey there, Little Listener." Hizashi's voice was smooth and soft, wrapping around Izuku's exhaustion laden bones like a blanket. Even better, the man slowly ran a hand down from Izuku's hair and under his chin, lightly encouraging Izuku to raise his head and meet the hero's eyes.

Whatever Hizashi saw there had the hero releasing a wounded little sound that was still the best thing ever because in the next moment he had two strong arms wrapped tightly around Izuku. Izuku didn't have time to raise his own arms, so they were pressed between him and Hizashi with slim fingers clutching and severely wrinkling Hizashi's jacket.

"Zawa's right. You give good hugs."

Hizashi let out a wet chuckle that informed Izuku he'd spoken aloud, but all he really did in reaction was burrow tighter.

"Ah. I'm Yamada Hizashi, I'm a Pro Hero, I'll get my ID for you in a moment, Midoryia-san, but I promise I'm not some random weirdo."

Izuku's mom laughed softly, a sound that was somehow obviously rusty. "I know who you are, Present Mic. The hair took me a moment, but you don't have a son as obsessed with heroes as mine without picking up a few things. Besides, I haven't seen him reach for contact with anyone but myself since…since too damn long. For that alone you'd have my thanks."

Izuku mumbled, interrupting whatever Hizashi was going to say. He felt light tugging on his curls and looked up into Hizashi's wryly amused face. "Pardon, Little Listener?"

Izuku sighed, before consenting to take a step back and look at his mother, though he didn't remove one of his hands from Hizashi's

jacket. “S’not Present Mic, mom.”

Hizashi blinked. “Pretty sure I am.”

Izuku waved his free hand and glared at him. “Sure, but that’s not why you’re *important.”*

Inko nodded. “Alright. Why is he important, baby?”

“Cause he’s Zawa’s you.”

This time both adults blinked, slowly, then looked at each other for help.

Finding no answer from Inko, Hizashi ran a large hand through Izuku’s curls again. “I’m Aizawa’s what, now?”

Izuku huffed. “His *person.* The one he had to get back to. I couldn’t leave my mom, he couldn’t leave you.”

“Oh.” Hizashi looked heartbroken and a quick glance back at his mother revealed tears gathering in her eyes.

Izuku started to let go of Hizashi’s jacket, fingers trembling. “Shit. That was one of those things I wasn’t supposed to say out loud, wasn’t it?”

“Hey, hey now. None of that.” Hizashi reached out and cupped both of Izuku’s cheeks before he could fully pull away. “I hate that the two of you needed that, needed someone to deliberately choose to come back to, but I’m honoured that I’m Shou’s person, and very happy that you told me. He probably wouldn’t have. So thanks, kiddo.”

Izuku reached up and grasped both of Hizashi’s wrists. He didn’t mean to, but by the time he felt cool skin Izuku couldn’t really withdraw the gesture. Something about Hizashi’s eyes, the earnestness in his tone, the waves his voice pounded into skin (following tracks worn well by the hours Izuku and Zawa would spend listening to old recording of Hizashi’s radio show) drove Izuku straight to honesty.

“I need you to take me to Zawa.”

“Little-Izuku.”

“Please.” Izuku’s voice cracked.

Hizashi wavered. It was clear that his first instinct was along the lines

of ‘yes, absolutely, anything to make Shouta happy.’ Unfortunately, his second instinct was the one he went with for the moment. “Your mom-“

“Says yes.” Inko was firm. “I have a lot of thanks to give Aizawa Shouta. If you have the time, we’d be happy to go.”

A tired smile broke out on Hizashi’s face, and that was all Izuku needed. He pivoted out of Hizashi’s hold, swept up the bag he’d dropped in the middle of the street, latched on to Hizashi’s sleeve, and started to pull the hero down the street.

“Izuku!”

Izuku stopped, turning to his mom. “But you said we could go,” he all but whispered, unaware of the desperation weaving into his tone.

The two adults weren’t so unaware, both softening. “And we can, baby, but we should probably check that Yamada-san has his shopping done, first.”

Izuku shook his bag. “I already got the jelly pouches. Even Zawa’s favourite flavour.”

Zashi looked down at the cloth bag hooked over his arm. “Yeah, then I’m done.” He gave a bemused shrug. “I was just picking up some take out and my attention was caught by the pouches.”

“Good, let’s go.” Izuku raised a foot.

“Shouldn’t we let Yamada-san lead? We don’t actually know where Aizawa-san is.”

Izuku looked back through bleary eyes at his mother, trying to focus on her kind smile and thin face. “He’s at UA? Where else would he be?”

“Hey, Zawa.”

“Problem Child.”

“Do you think I’ll still be able to get into UA?”

“Fuck. Watch that bug-like Nomu. That’s the third time it’s sat up. Why the fuck wouldn’t you get into UA?”

“Because I’m quirkl- Duck!”

“Problem child. Even if you decide not to use the recommendation I’ll be giving or Nezu’s been hit in the head by a brick and doesn’t recognize you as the fellow chaos gremlin that you are, you just decapitated a Nomu with a kitchen knife. Do you really think a bunch of robots are going to be a problem?”

“Huh.”

“Right. Come on. The sooner we finish this, the sooner we can go the fuck home.”

“You’ll let me share your naps spots now, right? Right Zawa? Zawa!”

Not Forgotten

Chapter Summary

> Aizawa and Izuku finally meet up again and there are hugs, naps, and plans for more destruction. There are also too many emotions and tactical retreats don't count as fleeing.

Chapter Notes

> This one is longer than expected but the characters had things to say and emotions to experience. One more after this! Please enjoy the reunion and a chapter full of Dadzawa moments.
>
> Proserpine_Fall made art! I'm very excited and grateful and please go look!

Shouta heard the door open but didn't turn to look. Only teachers or their guests made it this far into UA and there was a flock of swallows doing some very interesting aerial manurers outside the window.

He almost looked when he heard Nezu's voice, but Shouta was tired. And that was the Principal's Tour Voice, which generally wasn't one that provided Shouta with extra work.

He regretted this choice for all of an instant when he heard a young voice say, "Wow, so many heroes."

Falling, flailing, diving, leaping, the exact motion didn't matter. What mattered was that he was off the windowsill before Nemuri's outreached hands made it anywhere near him. He then used his own hands to spring himself off the floor in a gymnastic move he probably wouldn't have been able to pull off before his disappearance and thrust himself towards the doorway.

Towards Izuku.

Izuku didn't waste the instant either, understanding Shouta's movements before his slightly shocked colleagues and throwing his small body across the room and into Shouta's arms with a small sob.

Shouta felt thin arms close about his neck, but staggered slightly under the weight, his own limbs reminding him that the hospital staff had made a series of very disappointed faces when Shouta had checked himself out of the hospital.

Izuku accounted for the stagger though, as the little brat accounted for most things, throwing his legs out to counterbalance the motion before swinging in close and monkey-ing onto Shouta's back. Izuku's arms never let up for a moment (Shouta didn't want them to let up).

Shouta turned his head to look at the green mop pressed into his shoulders. The green mop with very impressive purple rings around his eyes. "You look like shit, Problem Child."

Izuku snorted. "Like you look better." He tugged on the new goggles. "These are cool, though."

Shouta just hummed in response, letting Izuku's warmth band across Shouta's back and sink into his lungs.

Izuku did the same for a moment, before wiggling against Shouta's shoulder blades. "So boney, Zawa. Zashi wasn't this boney."

"Zashi had regular meals these last few months. Wait. You let Zashi carry you?"

The blush that stole across Izuku's cheeks was surprisingly bright across his pale skin. "He's yours." The words were muttered into Shouta's neck, but Shouta still heard them.

And well. That really did explain everything. Shouta let his eyes slip from his Problem Child to Hizashi, standing by the door with Nezu on his shoulder and a ridiculous smile on his face.

The expression only softened when Shouta made eye contact, though the man's eyes shifted to the side in the manner the two of them had often used to convey 'look here.'

Shouta complied, as he always would for Hizashi, before freezing at the sight of a small, slightly round woman with green hair and her own sappy expression.

"Shit."

Izuku, the little shit, giggled into Shouta's neck.

Midoryia Inko's eyes sharpened, but she smiled. "Please call me Inko, I imagine we'll be seeing quite a lot of each other." Inko tilted her head to the side for a moment, studying the picture of her son clinging to the back of a tired man she'd never met, a man who's arms were trembling slightly but refused to put down her boy for even a second.

She stepped forward and sank into a deep bow in front of a room full of staring heroes. “Thank you, Eraserhead. I owe you a debt that I can never begin to repay.”

Shouta flatlined, briefly, intensely grateful for the weight of the kid on his back that made uncharacteristic flailing impossible. There was no way he was going to live any of this down already (he was pretty sure he’d knocked Vlad into a wall in his dash to get to Izuku).

“Ah. Please don’t. I mean, you’re welcome? I- oh, come on kid. Any chance you’d climb down and let me do this properly?”

“Fucking none.” Izuku buried his head tighter in Shouta’s neck.

“Right. Of course not.” Shouta sighed, but gave an odd, bobbing bow of his own (he hadn’t really wanted to let the kid down anyway). “Mido- Inko. Your son saved my life at least as many times as I saved his. There’s no debt. It’s my honour to help a hero as wonderful as your son.”

There was silence in the room and Shouta turned to Hizashi, hoping the man would be able to tell Shouta what he’d done wrong enough that no one was speaking. The man was useless though, all teary silence with his smile turned up to maximum sun.

Shouta blinked and turned back to Inko, only to grow more alarmed to realize that, although she’d straightened from her bow, her eyes had also filled with tears.

“Shit.” Someone was eventually going to mention his language around the kid, but Shouta didn’t care at the moment. “Shit, Problem Child. You didn’t tell me you got your tears from your mother.”

Izuku chuckled a suspiciously wet chuckle. “What Dadzawa, you thought I got them from my father?”

At his words, probably mostly the ‘Dadzawa’ nickname, there were several gasps and at least one additional chuckle echoing around the room, though Shouta refused to identify where they came from. Inko, on the other hand, reacted in purely physical means; her spine straightened harshly, though tears still lingered in her eyes, and she met Shouta’s gaze head-on.

“The position’s open, if you want it.”

Izuku lifted his head and joined Shouta in his confused staring.

“Mom?”

“Your *father,*” Inko spat the word, “answered my phone calls two weeks late and proved to be ultimately… unhelpful. Therefore the position of Izuku’s dad is wide open.”

Izuku tensed, Shouta could feel the boy’s muscles pulling taught even as he kept a deliberately loose arm around Shouta’s neck. Both of them had a good idea about ‘unhelpful’ and it’s likely translation to ‘cared not a fucking jot.’

Shouta blinked, slowly. “Do you happen to have his address.”

Izuku managed a one handed flail. “You’re not going to America to punch my former father!”

With a head tilt, Shouta let his face fall into one of his more disturbing grins, enjoying the staff members he could see step back and marginally impressed when Inko looked thoughtful and not unsettled. “Punching wasn’t exactly what I had in mind.”

“Unfortunately,” and Inko did actually look regretful, “I had a phone number only, and if he had any sense in his head, said phone number has been changed.”

“Not to worry!” All heads pivoted to Nezu and the smart ones immediately started to worry. “I have his address. As does the local police; there were some unfortunate allegations of embezzling. And extortion. And drug trafficking.”

Izuku placed an elbow on Shouta’s shoulder and managed to lean on it. “Do you think those allegations are based in fact?”

Shouta tilted his head and narrowed slightly burning eyes at his innocently smiling boss. “I’m really not sure.”

“Huh.”

“Principal Nezu.” Inko was looking at Nezu with dry eyes and delicately folded hands. “You’ve always been one of my son’s favourite heroes, so I’ve heard quite a bit about you.”

“Oh really?” The rat actually sounded delighted, even as Izuku went back to hiding his burning face in Shouta’s capture weapon.

“Yes. And Hizashi has told me about the Endeavour situation. As well

as your reaction to both my son's phone call and the initial police report."

"Has he?"

She nodded, as did Hizashi. Hizashi also, from his position leaning against the doorframe, stared dead at Shouta and Izuku. "Inko and I have formed an Alliance."

"Shit," Shouta and Izuku swore in unison.

Shouta turnned to Izuku, who hadn't taken his eye off the pair of his mother and Hizashi. "You were with them, how did this happen? Details? Warnings?"

Izuku shook his head, eye unmoving. "I don't know! I was half asleep! It was mom and Hizashi! They're *safe."*

Shouta acknowledged the logic of that, even as he catalogued the snickers of Nemuri and Snipe in the background.

Inko, completely ignoring her panicking son, turned to Nezu. "Hizashi seems to be of the opinion that you would be both interested in and useful to the Alliance. Perhaps not so much in the feeding and general taking care of our charges," Shouta made a sound, he wasn't sure which sound exactly, but he was sure his Problem Child agreed with it, "but definitely in the systematic destruction of a very useless police precinct. And a middle school."

Nezu didn't even pretend to waffle or resort to his usual dramatics. He just grinned his own sharp grin. "I'd be thrilled."

"No," Shouta said.

"No?" That was Hizashi, not Inko or Nezu and his voice was sharp-edged danger. Shouta waved it away.

"I'm not talking to you, Zashi." Shouta walked several steps back towards the couch next to his window, and did an odd little twist that had a betrayed looking Problem Child settling on the couch's edge. "No."

"But, Zawa-"

"No. You're tired. Sleep." Shouta ignored the fear-panic-terror that filled Izuku's eye as Shouta stepped away. He returned with his

sleeping bag and lay it across the couch behind Izuku, sinking one hand into green curls in reassurance the moment Shouta was within range.

“But-“

“No. You’ve done enough. We stopped an illegal experimentation ring, remember? Leave dismantling socialital institutions to your mother and Nezu.”

“I could-“

“Izuku, baby.” Inko called softly, drawing her son’s bleary-eyed stare. “Leave this to Mama. Remember when I asked to borrow one of your Notebooks? I started to record the instances where we were denied help or basic civil rights after the third instance where I was told you’d got detention for instigating a fight. I have a record of every. Single. Time. I’m prepared, sweetie. You can rest now.”

Izuku blinked at her, then at Nezu, then at Hizashi, then at Shouta. “Okay.” He spoke softly. “Okay.”

Shouta, who’d already manoeuvred both of them halfway into the sleeping bag (with Shouta’s back to the room because threats had to get through him first), brushed a strand of green hair out of the kid’s face before he hesitantly lay down.

Shouta ignored the dampness that spread across the chest of his dark shirt as Izuku lay his exhausted head down, eyes leaking once again. He also ignored the quiet murmur of Inko and Nezu plotting destruction, and the surprising number of highly volatile suggestions from his colleagues.

Instead, Shouta focused on the tentative hand carding through his own hair as Zashi sat on the arm of the couch, listening to the plans but guarding Shouta and Izuku, somehow knowing that Shouta hadn’t really been planning to take his own advice.

His plans didn’t really matter, though. The important ones had all been completed.

Shouta fell asleep to the steadfast, gentle motions of Hizashi’s hand and the quiet, even breaths of his son.

“Zawa?”

“Shh. Go back to sleep, Problem Child.”

“Noooo, don’t stop.”

“You’re such a cat.”

“Are you talking ‘bout my mannerisms or hair?”

“Yes.”

“…I don’t care. Keep petting.”

“Sleep.”

“You’re not sleeping, Zawa.”

“Not at the moment.”

“…Do you think it’s going to get easier? Sleeping.”

“Who knows. Probably. Less need for a watch, certainly.”

“I’m still coming over for cuddles and head pats when you have a proper house or apartment or whatever. You’ll need to give me a key.”

“Problem Child. I’ve just pulled four lock picks out of your hair. Why the fuck would I give you a key?”

“Sentimentality.”

“…Go to sleep, Izuku.

“K. Night, dad.”

Izuku woke warm. He woke warm and safe, which meant that Zawa was with him and they weren’t in the future-that-wasn’t. They’d never woken safe in the future-that-wasn’t. They’d never woken without their hero instincts telling them something was wrong wrong wrong and their survival instincts telling them to keep damn moving.

It had been better since they'd come back, even when they were working and plotting and waltzing right into trouble. The power of surprise and a rapidly finishing Save Society Checklist were heady, comforting things.

This warmth was something else entirely, though. This warmth wasn't just the safety of Zawa curled against Izuku's back, but the softness of a sleeping bag (probably yellow) against his cheek, the hum of UA's security system buzzing just below his hearing, and the presence of someone trusted standing guard.

Izuku blinked and opened his eyes slowly, wondering when the last time he'd awoken slowly actually was. The slightly blurry form of Hizashi was revealed and got clearer every time Izuku blinked. His blind eye was pressed into fabric, meaning that Izuku still had a pretty good view of Hizashi sitting on the floor with his back to the couch, cup of coffee in one hand and phone in the other.

His hair hadn't been put back up. Izuku reached out a hand without really thinking about it, brushing against the long yellow strands.

Hizashi turned slowly, slowly enough that Izuku distantly realized the man was trying not to startle him.

"Good morning, Little Listener."

Izuku blinked before rasping, "Is it really?"

"Yup! The two of you slept through the evening and the entire night. I mean, you got up once to shuffle to the bathroom and Shouta grunted until you both drank a juice pouch, but neither of you seemed verbal so I'm not counting it."

"Good choice," Shouta said with gravel coating his voice.

Izuku experienced a moment of brief vertigo as he found himself dragged into a sitting position, but happily went with the motion since it meant he got a sideways hug from Zawa.

Aizawa glared at Hizashi's shoulder, escaped strands of hair waving at the nape of his neck. "Why are you on the floor?"

Hizashi just grinned as he handed over Zawa's new goggles. "Cause I got kicked off the couch in the reshuffle and the couch arm only works for so long."

With a sigh, Zawa slipped the goggles on and gave a quick pat to the space beside him on the opposite side as Izuku. Hizashi's grin only grew when the moment he sat down, Zawa tipped into him and closed his eyes.

Izuku just giggled.

"Well," said Snipe, "I suppose ya won't be needing this, then."

Cracking one eye, Zawa gave a huff then wiggled so he could keep his lean and use the arm not wrapped around Izuku to grab the full coffee mug. "Thanks."

"Not a problem." Snipe tipped his hat and tucked his hands back under the red of his cloak. "And don't ya start with me, Mic. I respect the Alliance and watching this un's health after his ordeal, but I also respect a man's right to a decent cup'a coffee. And my own right not to be murdered over withholding it."

Aizawa cut of Hizashi's reply with a firm, "Logical."

"Do I get one?" Izuku still sounded sleepy, but that was what coffee was for, right?

"Uh." Snipe was staring at Izuku, clearly uncertain and just as clearly caving at the big green eye staring imploringly back, but was saved by Zawa.

Izuku made a happy squeak he'd probably be embarrassed by once he was more awake as he accepted Zawa's cup, happy to ignore the heroes as he set about drinking the remaining coffee.

"Shou!"

"It's the lesser evil, Zashi."

"The kid's that much a menace when wanting a cup?" Snip asked, eyeing Izuku's small form doubtfully.

"Yes." Shouta sighed. "No. Yes he's a menace, but he wouldn't ask again if you said no. It's just better for him to be awake sooner. Kid forgets concepts like filters and moderation when half-asleep."

"Mean, Zawa! You fight half-asleep all the time."

"But I'm always tired."

Izuku nodded, placing the empty cup on the arm of the sofa. “True. You’re far scarier when you’re fully awake.”

Hizashi blinked. “You’ve seen him fully awake?”

“The Nomu practical tests were challenging.” Izuku studied both Snipe and Hizashi under his lashes as they absorbed that tidbit. Izuku and Zawa had talked about how much they’d reveal, and ended up deciding as much as fucking possible. They were already going to be keeping so many secrets from their loved ones that they really didn’t want to keep more.

Besides, if they were letting people think that the two of them had been with the Doctor the whole time they’d been missing, instead of just the last two months, then it hardly made sense to keep details quiet that would help sell that story.

That said, Izuku didn’t want to upset anyone. He knew that Snipe and Hizashi were adults, were heroes, but tragedy was another thing entirely when it happened to someone you knew. Izuku was still hero enough to want to save his former teachers from that pain, if he could.

Snipe and Hizashi were holding out just fine, though. They looked angry, frustration evident in the line of Snipe’s spine and Hizashi’s eyebrows, but at the situation rather than Izuku or Aizawa.

Snipe eventually nodded and moved to take the coffee mug away, only to be stopped by a slow hand from Aizawa. “Snipe, wait.”

Both adult heroes turned to Zawa, who turned to Izuku. “Problem Child.”

“Zawa.” Izuku tilted his head.

“Return the spoon.”

“What spoon?”

“The spoon that was on the edge of the plate under the coffee cup in case it needed a stir.” Aizawa was using his long-suffering tone.

Izuku freely admitted he often deserved that tone, he just didn’t think now was one of those times.“I didn’t take the spoon?”

Zawa frowned at him.

“I didn’t take the spoon!” Izuku started patting down his pockets,

slipping his hand into the long coat he'd stolen from his mother's closet and refused to take off. His hand brushed cool metal and he froze, eye darting up to Zawa who, naturally, had caught the movement.

The man raised one eyebrow and Izuku caved like a child's block tower.

"So I apparently took the spoon." He'd also apparently taken a ball of twine, a handful of wires, a pair of sewing scissors, three needles, an apple, a chopstick, three sharp rocks, two napkins, a handkerchief with monogrammed initials that weren't his, a small spring, a disposable camera, and a knitting needle. "So maybe you have a point about me being dangerous when I'm tired."

"Aside from a bit of kleptomania, how dangerous is some string and a camera?" Snipe asked.

Izuku opened his mouth but Zawa covered it with a scarred palm and three long fingers. "No." Izuku's crossed arms and sad eye didn't sway the man, who merely glared in response. "No, you aren't having a discussion about how many weapons you can make with shit you find in your pockets until you have a least two more *decent* naps. Particularly with Snipe; he'd appreciate the skill too much."

"Where did it all *come from*?" Hizashi blurted, like he'd been trying to find the words for a while.

Izuku frowned as Zawa confiscated the wires, the camera (that he even sort of remembered paying for), and the chopstick. Izuku then ran a thumb over the sewing scissors and needles as he tucked them back into various pockets in his coat that he was pretty sure weren't originally there. "I think I sewed some additional pockets at some point."

Snipe let out a deep belly laugh, before scooping up the spoon and starting to walk away. "Definitely your kid, Aizawa. Good luck with that, Hizashi. And," he pointed the spoon at Izuku, "we're definitely taking a rain check on that weapons talk."

"Cool!" Izuku turned back to a spluttering Hizashi and a smirking Aizawa, tugging on the latter's sleeve. "Snipe wants to talk weapons with me."

Zawa laughed, the slow quiet chuckle that always wrapped around Izuku's trembling wrists and tired bones and *settled,* before leaning

forward and resting his forehead against Izuku's.

"Of course he does, Problem Child."

"I'm sorry."

"Don't be stupid, Problem Child."

"You'll need to re-learn your capture scarf."

"Which I'll do. You can help. A couple of fingers isn't a big deal, and considering the Nomu was going for my entire arm, I consider it a win."

"I-"

"Move on, Problem Child."

"…Fuck."

"Problem Child."

"I'm still sorry, Zawa."

"We both miscalculated, kid. The Doctor wasn't this frenetic before."

"All for One must have been acting as a leash. I mean it's great the Nomus aren't as advanced as the last time we did this, but I do appreciate a bit of stability in an enemy."

"Insanity is challenging as fuck."

"Yeah. Who knew?"

Everything was calm until it wasn't.

Shouta had been calmly eating a Recovery Girl Approved breakfast with Izuku, Hizashi, and Snipe. Inko had been by earlier to drop it off, having apparently stayed the night on a cot in the infirmary while bonding with Recovery Girl. Izuku's mom had lingered in the staff room to smother her son in affection and sneak an actual hug from

Shouta, but then disappeared to plot untold mayhem with the grandmotherly hero.

Hizashi had been given or forcibly taken (he and Snipe had very different stories) the day off, so his classes were covered. Snipe, on the other hand, had a work period and was ostensibly planning out the third year weapons course final.

Shouta vaguely heard Snipe drop his cutlery when Eri burst in the room, definitely saw Hizashi's guilty look as he picked the girl up, and barely registered Nemuri explaining about how the girl had learned Hizashi wasn't in class and really wanted to show him her picture right that exact moment.

All of those things were secondary to the feeling of his Problem Child threading slim fingers in between Shouta's remaining digits and squeezing as if the kid was about to be blown away. Or thought Shouta might be.

Eri was younger than when they'd first met her in the future-that-wasn't, was still small and pale and adorable. She also wasn't covered in blood and rubble and an entire collapsed building, like when they'd last seen her in the future-that-wasn't (his and Hizashi's beautiful baby girl who was healthy and happy and *talking*).

"Ah. There's someone I want you to meet, Eri." Hizashi sounded odd, like he wasn't exalty sure what kind of voice he should be using. "This is my best friend, Shouta, Aizawa Shouta, and his son, Midoriya Izuku. Shou, Izuku, this is my daughter, Eri. I, um. I adopted her, several months ago."

Eri turned big red eyes to Shouta and Izuku, clearly not realizing they were even in the room with her happy excitement and their frozen shock. Her little shoulders were tensing as she turned in Hizashi's arms, trauma and experience telling her that new people were rarely good, despite her recent time with heroes.

She stilled completely, however, when she saw Shouta and Izuku. Izuku smiled his largest sincere hero smile and let go of Shouta's hand. "Hi there, Eri-berry."

His words released the little girl from her uncertain shock, and she shrieked, throwing herself out of a startled Hizashi's arms.

Izuku had already reached forward, catching the little girl and spinning her in wide circles as they both giggled.

“Zuku! Zawa! Zuku.” She reached out and patted Izuku on his green mop as he nuzzled into her horn. Eri accepted the affection for a moment before reaching out to Shouta. “Zawa.”

He picked her out of the Problem Child’s arms because he would never deny her anything. Not any version of his little girl. His breath shook as he inhaled her apple-scented shampoo and small arms locked around his neck.

“Hello, Eri,” he whispered into her skull.

“Hi, Zawa.” She looked at him from her position in his arms, head tilted, before leaning forward to whisper in that little-kid way that meant everyone in the room heard. “You were right. Zashi is an excellent Papa.”

Shouta smiled. “I know.”

“And a really great hugger,” Izuku added from where he’d wrapped himself around Shouta’s waist. Eri nodded solemnly.

“I, uh, what. Just. What.”

All three looked to a spluttering Hizashi and open mouthed Nemuri. Snipe didn’t look much better from where he’d tipped his hat up to get in a really good stare.

“Ah yes. Perhaps now would be an adequate time for a couple of explanations?” Shouta wasn’t even surprised to see Nezu suddenly in the staff room. Explanations would probably go a little easier with the Principal present, so Shouta could maybe even dredge the tinniest bit of gratitude for the surveillance cameras Nezu had been undoubtably watching.

Eri grabbed his attention again by patting his cheek and asking with solem red eyes, “Your Birdman’s gone now?”

Shouta had no air in his lungs, could barely breath much less speak, but his Problem Child, as heroic as ever, tightened his arms around Shouta’s middle before talking over. “Yeah, Eri, our Birdman is gone gone gone.”

Shouta felt a nose dig into his spine before Izuku turned to look at Nezu, now sitting on a chair that had been pulled out from the table to face them.

“Right, so you know the Shie Hassaikai thing and Overhaul’s creepy plague doctor bird mask?”

“Yes,” Nezu tilted his head. “The destruction of the Shie Hassaikai was rather big news five months ago and well discussed among hero circles. Particularly since the breakthroughs came from a little girl with a folder and a note sending her to Present Mic. Sir Nighteye’s agency was quite…disconcerted.”

“Right. Overhaul was Eri’s Birdman, may he rot in prison, and ours was the Doctor. See, apparently human experimenters share notes. Like, not all their notes, because they’re also possessive as fuck, but some notes. And resources, they share resources, mainly people and subjects.”

Shouta was watching Nezu’s fur bristle, just slightly, while Shouta stood behind his children. He’d stop hiding in a moment, just as soon as he stopped feeling stupidly grateful for the chance to remember how his lungs were supposed to work.

“So you sent out folders.” Nezu didn’t frame his words as a question.

“So we sent out folders. It’s kind of surprising the freedoms you get once you’re a quirkless on a leash. Like, I was the perfect receptacle and my DNA super useful for research? But no one actually thought I could do anything. Including escape. So I got assigned a lot of cleaning jobs in-between experiments and left relatively unsupervised in rooms full of computers. I wasn’t a great hacker, and I had to learn really slowly and cautiously, but I got better.”

Shouta slipped his free hand over Izuku’s neck, wrapping three fingers just under the mop of green hair. Izuku was an excellent hacker, full of tips and tricks for technology that didn’t even exist yet. They needed an out, however, a reason to explain the one thing that they both knew was coming. The one point that Nezu at the very least would absolutely highlight because they couldn’t save Eri and Touya and manipulate all sorts of strings without someone figuring out that-

“You could get messages out?” Hizashi sounded like his heart was breaking and Shouta couldn’t bare to open his eyes and look. “Nezu’s folders and Eri and, you- you could have told us where you were? That you were-”

“We weren’t *okay,*” Izuku snapped before Shouta could open his mouth. “And *where* was much harder than you think, when you were moved as much as we were.”

Shouta opened his eyes when Eri shifted in his arms, uncertain what exactly was going on and if she wanted to stay with her heroes or comfort her Papa and Auntie Nem, who were clinging to each other's arms. Shouta offered to let her down, only to have thin arms band tighter against his neck. He sighed, but hugged the little girl closer.

"Yeah, Zashi. We could've gotten something out, probably. But the Doctor's set up was years in the making and complex as fuck. It was easier to start with his allies and other information that had less chance of tipping him off and reducing our chance of escape; the Doctor guarded his own secrets much more closely."

Shouta looked up once he'd finished, met the eyes of each and every one of his friends and colleagues through tinted googles even as his spine straightened and voice deepened. "And the Doctor had to be *stopped.* It was *bad.* He was *bad.* As a hero, the price was *worth it."*

Izuku stiffened and Shouta realized he'd missed it, missed one of the heroes in the room slide their eyes to Izuku, or something similar. Missed the insinuation that Shouta didn't have the right to speak for Izuku, didn't have the right to consign a child to literal torture, which he *didn't.* Even without Izuku being an adult trapped in a child's body, Shouta would never, ever willingly let his kids take a hit like that if he could do anything at all to stop it.

He couldn't stop it. Not in the future, and not in the past. He and Izuku had spent months trying to find a better plan, and failed. Spectacularly.

They'd also miscalculated a bit, not quite realizing how far off his rocker the Doctor was and how quickly he'd spiral without All for One or even Shigaraki. They'd planned on capture; that had been the only way to get close enough without sicking an entire set of heroes on him, and the heroes were already busy with the Meta Liberation Army. And neither Izuku nor Shouta were comfortable leaving the Doctor to anything resembling chance. They just couldn't.

They hadn't planned on being forced to fight the Nomu over and over in glorified cage matches the Doctor called field trials, even it such fights did ultimately significantly lower the number of Nomu they eventually had to deal with.

Dismantling the Doctor's labs had been hard.

Izuku hadn't missed the implication that travelled around the staff room. He bristled, stepping in front of Shouta with clenched fists.

“You don’t know. You don’t *get it.* It wasn’t as simple as sending the police a digital map with a pin in it and the phrase ‘Pick us up here, thanks.’ You don’t know what it’s like to be a commodity and have to earn your fucking keep with something other than your blood or what it takes to hack computers under a brilliant mad man’s eye while having to see the details of human trafficking in all its forms or what it takes to keep fighting literal monsters that were once *people* for some twisted combination of experiments and shits and giggles He had to be *stopped*.”

Izuku took a step forward, stopping not because of the tears sliding down his neck but because of Shouta’s hand on his wrist and Eri’s arm latching onto his neck. “*I wouldn’t have gone.* Even if Shouta could have gotten me out, which he couldn’t, what with the chains and the cell and the battle trials, *I wouldn’t have left him.* Not after- I had to leave all- you can’t ask me to *leave him,* I-“

Shouta knew that voice. He *hated* that voice. That was Izuku’s ‘I buried literally all of my friends’ voice. Shouta wanted to beat that voice with a bat and smother it with hugs.

Instead, he shifted a very quiet Eri (he also hated that she was so young and understood trauma so well, but he’d already beaten Overhaul with a capture weapon and a wall and could smother Eri in hugs later) to his hip and hooked and elbow around Izuku’s face.

Izuku’s breath stuttered as his one working eye was covered by the crook of Shouta’s elbow. The kid reached up to cling onto Shouta’s arm with both hands, digging small crescents into Shouta’s skin under his dark sleeve.

It wouldn’t take long for Izuku to pull his tears back and shift his expression behind a mask (another thing Shouta hated, maybe he should start a list). Izuku still cried, Shouta had repeatedly made sure the kid knew that he never had to stop crying even when everything was objectively horrible, but he’d become much better at pulling himself together or working through the tears.

Even still, or maybe because of that, Shouta ignored Izuku’s rapidly calming breaths to murmur into his ear. Nonsense words, sounds that could never be uncoded because they were based on a set of experiences and events that would never happen. Phrases that were meant to calm, codes that had seen far too much use after nightmares and battles and cells and alleyways.

Shouta wondered, absently, if Hizashi and the others knew how deliberate the motion was, how much focus it had taken not to pull Izuku behind him, despite the trust they both had for everyone in this room.

Nezu did, Shouta was certain, as he met black eyes and saw a snout that wasn't even pretending to smile.

"I agree with young Midoryia." Izuku sniffed and tugged Shouta's arm down around his neck so he could see the Principal and the Principal's bared teeth. "Some people need to be stopped by any means necessary. Experimenters first among them. Besides, it appears to be a very…neat piece of work. I'd love to discuss the details some time when emotions aren't quite as high. In the mean time, I do believe that I need to say thank you for my own protege. Touya has been absolutely wonderful and I certainly would have never have found him without your folder."

Their folder that had nothing to do with human trafficking or experimentation, just Endeavour being a shitty human. Fuck. Still, Shouta could recognize a stay of execution when he saw one and jump on it with the desperate vigour of a man who'd found time travel to be the only viable solution to fix the mess he'd survived.

"You're welcome. I think. I'm not cleaning up your combined chaos, though."

"Certainly not!" A deliberate lightness laced Nezu's tone. "You'll be too busy with your own kids, I'm certain."

Shouta opened his mouth, quite certain he only had technically one kid at this point in time, but Izuku beat him to it, not a trace of distress in his voice. "Yes, absolutely. Speaking of trouble: candy apples. I want one. Eri, have you had a candy apple yet? You'll love them."

"Apple?" She tilted her head even as she let him finish scooping her off Shouta.

Izuku nodded. "Yup. I'm done, no more talking. Lets go get apples. Apples covered in sugar."

Eri looked immediately sold by the concept, quickly joining Izuku in twin puppy dog pouts when Shouta placed two palms on their heads. "You're forgetting something." They both angled their heads into each other and Shouta almost melted from cuteness. Only years of practice

let him hold out. “Permission from Zashi.”

Eri whipped her head around to stare at Hizashi. “Papa.”

Hizashi had tears in his eyes, an arm locked around Nemuri’s waist, and a shoulder leaning on Snipe. “Sure, baby.” He turned to look at Shouta. “Shou, you sent me a daughter while going through hell and trusted me to look after her. Of course you can take her out.” He firmed his stance. “As long as you take one of Nezu’s super phones.”

Shouta blinked, even as Izuku cheered. “Don’t worry Dadzawa. Nezu passed them both to me earlier. They’re super cool and I promise to set it up for you and fill your photos with Eri, me, and cats.”

Nezu clapped his paw. “I promise that Hizashi and Power Loader are the only ones beside myself that have access to the GPS tracker information!”

Shouta snorted, making Nemuri give a watery smile and Snipe calm enough to grab a seat again. “That include the tracker in my goggles, cane, capture scarf, and Izuku’s scarf?”

“Yes!” Nezu was either pleased with himself or with Shouta. It was difficult to tell.

“Excellent. Let’s go.” Izuku grabbed Shouta’s wrist while shifting Eri to his back and marched for the door. He paused only long enough for Shouta to run a hand down Nemuri’s hair and across Hizashi’s shoulders, Izuku taking the brief pause to nod to Snipe and exchange a weird teeth show with Nezu.

Shouta waited till the staff room door clicked behind him to ask, “Tactical retreat?”

“I’ve experienced enough feelings recently, Zawa. There better be no more for at least eight hours.”

“And here I thought you were supposed to be the emotionally stable one.” Shouta deliberately looked up at the ceiling so Izuku wouldn’t see his smile.

Izuku just smile-scowled. “Wow, way to foist that off on the thirteen year old kid.”

“You’re fourteen.”

“Huh. Right. Anyways. I talked to Kacchan yesterday, Zawa. Kacchan. Who gave a stupidly stilted apology that I actually believe is sincere and was apparently the only one other than my mom and the Bakugous who actually looked for me. There will be no more emotions.”

“Candy apples!” Eri squeed, tugging on Izuku’s hair and clearly happy to being going out with her long missing heroes for her favourite fruit.

“Exactly Eri. Only candy apples.” Izuku nodded, despite the tiny fists in his curls.

“And cats,” Shouta added.

“Right, and cats. Wait, cats?”

“Zawa?

“He’ll keep her safe.”

“The safest.”

“And loved.”

“The most loved.

“And happy.”

“Eri’ll be the happiest little girl ever, with tons of over-protective hero aunts and uncles and a Dadzawa that will make sure no one ever takes her away from them.”

“Right.”

“You’re looking at me funny Zawa. Don’t you believe me?”

“I’ll keep you safe.”

“I…yes, Zawa. Safe and loved and happy. One day.”

“Soon. One day soon, Problem Child.”

Conversations

Chapter Summary

> Aizawa breathes, All Might gets adopted, and someone decides time travel is a reasonable explanation. Izuku loves his family, even the ones that don't know they're family yet.

Chapter Notes

> Wow, so the story is done. And that feels weird. Thank you for all the support and I'm not sorry if I made you cry, because that's a compliment I really wasn't expecting. I really hope you enjoy the last chapter!

Shouta breathed. The steam from his floral tea worked it's way into his lungs the same way that Izuku's warmth worked into his bones and Eri's laughter worked into his head.

Nezu's super phone (the one with enough modifications to make Izuku glow with the thought of hacking into each and every feature) beeped with the loud, obnoxious jingle for Hizashi's radio show. Shouta's next breath turned into a sigh, even as a smile tugged at his lips.

"That makes five. We haven't even been here half an hour and Zashi's texted you five times, Zawa."

Shouta didn't look up from his phone, smiling at the picture of Nemuri draping herself over Thirteen and the two of them glaring at Vlad. He didn't need to look up to kick Izuku in the shin.

"Hey!"

"Stop being smug," Shouta muttered as he responded with a picture of Eri waving a feather at a green cat's nose. He sent the picture because it was cute and not because Shouta thought steady responses might calm Hizashi's entirely legitimate anxiety.

Somehow, Izuku's side-eye was conveying how very little he'd believe that reasoning, and Shouta hadn't even explained out loud.

Shouta tucked his phone away, not feeling the need to respond to large amounts of heart and cat face emojis. "Your mom's texted you at

least three times, and that's after you called her on the way over."

Izuku looked down. "I didn't want her to worry. More."

Sinking his fingers into green curls, Shouta tugged. "You're a good son."

"Maybe." Izuku was staring at his white knuckles, only to relax his fingers and start absently running a thumb over raised scars instead.

Shouta tugged harder, making Izuku yelp. "You're a good son."

Izuku had been forced to meet Shouta's eyes by the tug and they held each other's gaze for a solid minute before Izuku escaped by burying his head in his arms with a groan. "I guess you'd know, Dadzawa."

Eri charged over, giggling with the feathered toy in one arm and tortoiseshell kitten dangling in the other. Izuku was quick to correct her hold on the cat, who really didn't seem to mind the hold since it meant the creature got snuggles, and quickly got roped into playing.

Shouta breathed. He may have also, just a bit, smiled at nothing in particular.

"Right."

"Right."

"…I love you."

"I love you, too… if you die, Problem Child, you're expelled."

"If you die, Zawa, I'm haunting your ass."

"…"

"I meant what I said."

"Oh, shit. I've gotta go."

Zawa whipped his head over at that, then followed Izuku's gaze out the window of the cafe. Across the quiet street there was a tall, thin, yellow scarecrow of a man sitting on a bench. He had bent shoulders and a phone clutched so hard in his hands that it was surprising he hadn't broken the device, even if you didn't know the monstrous strength hidden inside his skeletal frame.

Zawa huffed, but he also ran a hand through Izuku's curls. "Fine. I expect you to come talk to me before you take off anywhere out of sight though. Particularly now that I have both Hizashi and your mother to worry about."

"And Nezu! You know he's going to relish being part of an Alliance."

Zawa huffed again, but Izuku was already out of his seat. He paused to run his own hands through Eri's hair, who looked up in confusion but settled when Zawa moved closer and asked for the names of the cats flocking to the little girl.

The bell chimed as Izuku left the shop and stood, stuck on the stoop. He had so much to say to Toshinori. So much he could never say.

A customer with bright red skin got Izuku moving again when they glared at him for blocking the doorway to the cafe. Izuku supposed the details didn't really matter. He might never get One for All back, might never have the mentor relationship with Toshinori that he remembered, but he was absolutely going to have some sort of relationship with the man.

Izuku stood by his friends, and Toshinori was, in many ways, his first. And the man needed a friend. Izuku understood that now as a fallen hero himself better then he ever did as a student with stars in his eyes and bones made of dreams.

He sat down gently, staring back across the street and into the cafe where he could see Eri in the window seat that Zawa had evidently chosen to move them to after Izuku had left. The candy apples had been a hit, but the kitties were an explosion. Hizashi wouldn't know what hit *him* when he came to pick them all up and saw two (because the green cat had sat on Zawa's lap and refused to be moved) sets of sad eyes begging for feline friends.

Izuku set his cup down on the bench with a slight tap, well aware of the weight of Toshinori's eyes.

"Here. It's tea, a blend good for the stomach. I've already had two

cups in the last hour and really don't need a third."

"Ah, thank you, but that's, really, that's unnecessary." Toshinori's words fell out in an uneven tumble. Izuku had almost forgotten how awkward the man was when he wasn't All Might.

He was adorable.

"One could argue that most gifts are unnecessary." Though this one was absolutely necessary. Izuku had also forgotten how fucking thin Toshinori was before Izuku, his mom, Gran Torino, and Recovery girl had held an intervention and gotten the man to really start taking care of himself. Izuku may have weaponized his tears (Recovery Girl may have given him a sucker for the strategy).

"I, well."

Izuku snorted, drawing Toshinori's stare that had once again fallen to the phone in his hands. "Look, I get that food is hard, when you're not used to it."

Izuku turned to face Toshinori for the first time, deliberately lifting one very thin hand to move curly hair back and reveal his equally thin face and milky eye.

Toshinori's indrawn breath was sharp and long, giving Izuku enough time to actually study his former mentor with the eye that actually worked.

Izuku frowned when he saw Toshinori's head began to dip down again, and actually went so far as to place one slightly trembling hand on Toshi's arm. Slowly. If anyone deserved to have a bit of lingering trauma it was Toshi.

"Stop that." Izuku used his Hero Voice, the one that was deliberately crafted to keep desperate civilians from running back into burning buildings. The Voice wasn't quite as effective with his younger vocal cords, but Toshinori's head cracked up like a string had been tugged.

"Stop what?"

Izuku withdrew his hand and crossed his arms, staring back at Zawa in the window and letting Toshinori sit in the blind spot of Izuku's vision. "Feeling guilty. No, you don't get to argue."

Izuku pointed to Zawa in the window, whose hair hid his face as he

leaned over Eri, whose feet were kicking while sitting in the man's lap. "That's Eraserhead."

Toshinori sucked in another breath. "I heard he'd been found."

"Yes, we were. He's my dad. Not biologically, that father is in the States getting arrested for something he may or may not have done, but Zawa is my dad because I love him and he's my hero. He also gets that same stupid look on his face that you were just wearing.

"I *get* it. I get *guilt.* I get that you look at me, the small, too skinny kid, with more scars than most Pros and a fucked up eye and think 'I should have been able to save him' or 'just one more person I couldn't save,' but that's stupid. No one can save everyone. Sometimes they even need to save themselves."

Izuku fought the urge to turn and face Toshinori, to see him, instead listening to the rustle of the man's clothes that indicated he'd returned to the habit of pulling on too large sleeves.

With a sigh, Izuku placed one scarred hand over his eye, pressing until the shakes stopped and cool fingertips were all he could feel. More quietly he continued, "Zawa blames himself for my eye. Because I lost my sight saving him. I've told him he's stupid. I've told him that the fact he forces guilt on himself hurts me. I've told him that we needed him and his quirk in order to escape and survive. And he's better, but I don't think it's ever something we're going to see eye to eye on."

Izuku smirked, a much muted version of Aizawa's crooked unsettling grin. Then he sighed again, lowering his hand to his lap and facing an intent Toshinori. "And that's fine. He might never fully believe me, but I've never told him that in the moment, I didn't think of any of those things at all, true as they are. He was in danger and my body just *moved.* How can I blame him for my own selfish action?"

"My boy-" Izuku felt himself tear up at that familiar nickname, but he reached forward, stopping Toshinori in his tracks by gently placing both hands over the larger man's, still tightly grasping his phone.

They both looked at the large crossing of scars that traced the back of Izuku's hands, which contrasted sharply to Toshinori's smooth but white knuckled and skeletal grip.

"I don't know who you're working up the courage to call." Though Izuku would bet his All Might collection that it was Sir Nighteye regarding something about Togata and One for All. "But you don't

need to see eye to eye to love them and talk with them."

All Might's breath rattled and he quickly withdrew his hands in order to grab a handkerchief and cough up some blood. Not enough that Izuku was overly worried, just yet. "You're so sure I love them? Or that I'm not waiting for a call myself?"

Izuku shook his head, small smile creeping onto his face. "Holding the phone that hard while looking like your going to the gallows either means you're waiting for really really bad news, or your scraping up every scrap of courage to call someone you love when you really really don't want to." Izuku reached up and poked Toshi between the eyes, right on a deep furlough. "Platonic, romantic, familial, it doesn't matter what kind of love. I took a gamble."

One with increased odds based on knowing this man inside and out, including his tragic backstory, but Izuku was an excellent underground hero and made use of what he had. Particularly information.

Toshinori closed his eyes, the shadows around them shifting in odd ways. "It's time I called an old friend. We had a, a fight, years ago. He reached out, recently, due to some outside situational factors, but. Well, I find myself quite unsure what to say."

Izuku leaned back, head hitting the top of the bench, and let the sun heat his face. The mini-capture weapon that Power Loader-sensei had made pooled comfortingly at his throat.

"I have two things to say to that."

"Don't leave me in suspense, now." There was definitely the beginning of a smile in Toshi's voice. Izuku was absurdly proud of that, the heat unfurling in his chest far nicer than that of the perfectly lovely sunshine.

"If you insist. First. Was the fight because you were taking on guilt? And your friend was being protective?" It absolutely was. The friend was Sir Nighteye and the two of them couldn't communicate past their mutual guilt and worry worth shit.

"No, of course not. Well. Maybe. A little?"

Izuku snorted. "So yes, then. Look, even if you still don't agree about whatever prompted the fight, maybe you can respect the choices you both made and enjoy the fact that your friend cared enough to try and

protect you?"

Toshinori was silent, hopefully spinning Izuku's words around in his mind, so Izuku gave him a moment before continuing, "As to the second. Who the fuck cares about 'outside situational factors.'"

Toshinori whipped around at the swear, as was Izuku's intention. Izuku shrugged, leaving both palms facing the sky.

"Just because an outside factor triggered your friend reaching out, doesn't mean they weren't sitting on a bench somewhere clutching their phone, trying to find words to say. Maybe they just weren't lucky enough to have their outside factor be a skinny, traumatized teen who decided to ignore personal space and societal boundaries and sit next to them on said bench."

Toshi laughed, a deep, slightly wet sound that made Izuku beam. "I suppose you might be right. You're very wise, for a boy your age."

"It's the trauma." Izuku chirped, then froze. Toshi, showing the experience of a veteran hero, looked mildly alarmed and a bit cautious at the grin Izuku felt spreading across his face. "You're right, you know."

"About what, exactly?" Toshi was leaning back, now.

"I am a boy. A youngster. I should act like it, sometimes." Izuku nodded once, sharply.

"Well. Yes?"

Izuku stood up, still shorter than a sitting Toshi, and grabbed Toshi's wrist in one hand and his gifted tea in the other. "Let's go."

"I, what?" It was actually kind of impressive to see a giant skeleton who had the literal grace and power of the number one hero flail wildly about, desperately trying not to crush the small boy who was dragging him across the street.

"You're obviously not going to call your friend now, not that you have to, it's your choice overall, but what you need in the meantime is cats!"

"Cats?"

"You're not allergic, are you?" Izuku turned his face up to Toshi, fully

letting the teary eyes work to his advantage, figuring his returned smallness and youth should counteract any trouble the scars created in begging effectiveness.

“No-“

“Great!” And they were through the door and standing next to the table that Zawa had commandeered in the otherwise empty cat cafe.

“Zawa! This is-ah.”

Zawa looked at him with complete and utter disappointment. “Problem Child. You kidnapped someone without even getting their name?”

Izuku placed the tea on the table so he wouldn’t spill it while he flailed. “No! I adopted someone without even getting their name.” Toshi spluttered. “He was *sad* Zawa.”

Zawa sighed, but Izuku knew that his grumpy dad had gotten quite close to Toshinori before the former number one hero’s death. This re-introduction was important, even if Toshinori didn’t know that yet.

Zawa didn’t actually get a chance to speak because Eri tugged on Izuku’s shirt. “He’s getting adopted like me?”

“Yup!” Izuku reached down to lift Eri into his arms, turning them so she could see Toshi while feeling as safe as possible.

The little girl stared at Toshi for a moment, before nodding. “I was sad too, before I got adopted.”

“Oh,” was Toshinori’s very eloquent reply. “I’m Yagi Toshinori?” Zawa rolled his eyes and sipped his own medicinal tea, while Izuku snickered.

“Nice to meet you! I’m Midoriya Izuku, grumpy pants over there is Aizawa Shouta, and this is Yamada-Aizawa Eri.”

Zawa slammed down his tea. “That’s not her name.” Eri had already whipped her head around though, staring at Aizawa. “You’re going to adopt me too?!”

“I, um.” Zawa stared back at the suddenly very intent little girl, before deflating. “We can talk to your dad about it. Later. If that’s something you want.”

“Yes!” Eri wiggled in excitement. Izuku let her down and she ran off to tell her cat friends that she was getting a *second* hero dad.

Aizawa glared at Izuku who grinned back, completely unrepentant, before turning to face Toshi, who, to his credit, didn’t even take a step back.

“Are you prone to tears or unnecessary noise and dramatics?” Aizawa asked intently.

“No?” Toshinori still looked confused.

“Then you can sit.”

Izuku rolled his eyes. “Rude. I’m going to go play with Eri until Hizashi gets here and I can tell him you said that.”

Toshinori did sit at the table, while Izuku plopped to a cushion on the ground and started wrestling with the green cat. There were a few minutes of playing noise and a giggling Eri before Zawa sighed.

“So. All Might. Have you considered teaching?” Aizawa asked without looking away from his children in a sea of cats.

Toshinori spat out the tea he’d, finally, started drinking.

“Zawa! I thought we’d work up to the secret-identity thing.” Izuku didn’t pout from his spot on the floor. He did not.

Aizawa just ignored them both. “Because I can recommend a few good schools for getting your Teaching Degree.”

“It’s fine, Zawa. I’m fine.”

“No. It’s not. Your eye, Problem Child.”

“Worth it.”

“I could have lived without my fucking quirk.”

“And I can live without my fucking eye. We both have all our limbs Zawa, which is better than the future-that-wasn’t.”

“That’s a damn fucking low bar.”

“Look, Zawa. Your quirk was worth it. It’s a part of you in a way I can’t ever really understand. Losing One for All hurt like hell, but it wasn’t mine that same way. As evidenced by my many broken bones. Erasure is your bones. Besides, we kinda need it for the Nomus.”

“…Thanks, Problem Child.”

“…I’m sorry that it’s broken.”

“The doctor broke it, not you, though I suppose we couldn’t expect his best work when he was being held at knife point by a profusely bleeding child.”

“Right. So. I’m surprised he bandaged me up and let us return to the cell?”

“I’m now a mutation and you’re an empty vessel with actual strength. We’re far too interesting to be just let go. Or killed.”

“Right. I have the facility mapped, three lock-pick equivalents in what passes for my boot, and a breakdown of all the Nomu’s quirks. Can we set the escape plan in full motion now?”

“Yeah. I’ve got the attack patterns of his best fighters down and he’s distracted by the need to find his own subjects now that All for One isn’t supplying bodies. Let’s clean house.”

“With fire.”

“…Stick to your knives, please.”

“So. Time traveller, huh?”

Izuku didn’t look up. “Wow. You reached that conclusion before Nezu. I think he and Zawa are playing some weird game, though. Some kind of puzzle-thing that will ultimately end with Nezu knowing. Good work for being first!”

Touya stared down at him for a solid five minutes. “That it?”

Izuku half-lifted his head, watching Touya out of one brilliant eye. “I thought the threat was implicit, but if you want: tell anyone and I’ll burn you.”

“Really think you can?” Touya raised an eyebrow and placed his hands on his hips.

Izuku just smirked. “Already did.”

“Shit.” Touya flopped down like his strings were cut, head resting on the ground beside Izuku’s knee, coat spread around him as he stared up at the leaves. “I became a villain, then.”

“Yup.” Izuku put his finger in his book and actually turned to face the sprawled man beside him. “Pretty damn good at it too.”

“Did I drag Toga with me?”

“Don’t think you had to do much dragging.”

“Double shit.” Touya stared at the leaves long enough that Izuku went back to his book, the only sound remaining the wind between them. “Please never answer any of my questions about the future ever again.”

“Not the future anymore. Besides, I’ve withstood torture; your puppy dog eyes aren’t going to do squat.”

Touya glared at Izuku but didn’t sit up. “Puppy. Really.”

“Hellhounds are still dogs.” The silence almost settled again, until Izuku sighed, closed his book, and wrapped an arm around his knees. This man was just as sharp as the one who’d hurt his friends, but the sharpness had shifted to be mostly pointed inwards. Izuku recognized that from the damn mirror. “You’re a better hero, if that makes you feel better. And you’re happier now, I think. You definitely have a better coat.”

Touya let out a strangled breath, before sitting up and gesturing to a dark sleeve studded with small dark silver bits. “*Thank* you. Fuyumi says it’s overly dramatic.”

Izuku let a small smile grow. “Looks like it has good pockets. Could fit a lot of knives in there.”

Touya looks at Izuku’s freckled face leaning haphazardly against his knee, then at the place where Izuku’s book had disappeared, ostensibly into his own pockets, and back up to the gleaming emerald eye.

Touya blinked. “I like you.”

“Yeah, okay.” Izuku had always liked underdogs. And Zawa couldn’t get all the adopting fun. Izuku had only really adopted Toshinori since they came back and Zawa was about to crush that record, what with the entirely of 1-A. “Walk me to class.”

Izuku stood gracefully before leaning down to haul Touya up by the wrist. He grasped carefully but firmly around the still burnt but better integrated skin that Izuku knew was mostly attributed to the fit Recovery Girl had thrown when she’d first met Touya.

Touya followed along for a moment, caught in the feeling of warm, unhesitating contact, before he shook his head and stared at the thin and slightly hunched shoulders of the figure beside him. “So you need an escort because you’re expecting to be attacked on UA grounds?”

Izuku shrugged, tugging at his grey sleeve slightly. “Not by anything other than memories.”

“Ah.” Touya glanced up at the sky. “Did you know that a university student who suddenly wakes up with newly pink hair will blame everyone except their newest little sister who is somehow the family angel, despite being very open about literally wanting to stab people? Frequently?”

Izuku found himself grateful for Touya as they walked through the clean, clear, and not ruinous halls of UA. A feeling Izuku thought he might have to get used to. The man actually had Izuku laughing at some of his family antics instead of wallowing in memories of events that would thankfully (and also unfortunately) never take place.

Both of them had been surprised the first time Izuku had let a snort escape, stopping in the middle of the hallway as if the sound was echoing. A very smug Touya had simply smirked before jumping into a new tale, tugging Izuku forward using the hand that Izuku had, at some point (Izuku had no idea which point, exactly), wrapped in the sleeve of Touya’s surprisingly soft coat.

They walked through the door to the classroom of 1-A and every head turned to stare. Izuku really hadn’t thought this whole arriving to class last thing through very well.

He took a step behind Touya, feeling no shame whatsoever because he saw the corner of Zawa’s sleeping bag behind the man’s desk. They were both, apparently, in complete agreement that hiding was a

totally valid strategy.

“You cannot be late on the first day! It’s rude and disrespectful!” Izuku had missed Iida’s chopping motions, or what he presumed to be chopping motions because Touya was tall and actually really excellent to hide behind.

“Dude, chill,” Touya said, looking up to the clock. “He’s got like, two minutes. Plenty of time.”

About half the class turned to stare at the clock and check, while Ashido leant forwards and asked, “Who are you? Aren’t you’re too old to be a student?”

Placing two hands above his heart, Touya replied, “Ow, so hurtful. Don’t you know not to accuse random strangers of being old?”

Shouto, way in the back of the class, actually stood up to walk forward a few steps. “Touya? Why are you here?”

Izuku took a moment to press his forehead firmly into Touya’s shoulder blade before patting the man on the back and stepping quickly to his seat. Izuku glanced up just after he’d given and received a nod of acknowledgement from Bakugou, to see Touya open his mouth for what Izuku knew to be a wild, entertaining, and highly inaccurate story.

So Izuku shook his head and chose to bite the attention-grabbing-bullet and answer Ashido’s question. “That’s Todoroki Touya. He’s Nezu’s- did they ever actually give you a title?”

Touya shrugged. “Student, apprentice, sidekick, assistant, secretary, dogsbody, intimidation-factor. Why settle for one title when I can have many?”

The bell cut off any response and Aizawa-sensei rose from behind the desk, staring at the class for a solid thirty seconds before sighing and actually stepping out of his sleeping bag.

“Welcome to first year heroics. You’re here because you have potential and I’m not about to let you waste it. He,” Aizawa gestured to Touya, “is here because Nezu is a busybody of the highest order.”

Touya held up both hands. “Not this time. I was just escorting my friend Izuku to class.”

Aizawa paused mid motion to turn back and look from Touya to Izuku. Izuku watched the physical shift of spine and scrunch of eyes that took the man from Aizawa-sensei to Dadzawa.

“Since when have you two been friends?”

Izuku met his dad’s stare and then flicked his eyes to the ceiling. “About thirty seven minutes and a surprising conversation ago.”

“Right.” Dadzawa ignored his entire class to loom from across the room. “You hurt my son and they will never find your body.”

“I have never believed anyone so much as right in this moment.” Touya cocked his head as he stared at Eraserhead, then turned to stare at a brightly grinning Izuku. “Right.” Touya clapped his hands and left them pressed palm to palm in front of his chest. “I’m out. I have a lot of questions, so I’m going to go write a list. And then burn it.”

Izuku laughed, loudly, and everyone pivoted towards him, but he just shook his head and smiled at his tired old dad and smug new friend.

Touya pointed at his brother. “Remember to use your words, baby brother, or Mom and Fuyumi will use their Sad but not Disappointed Stares, Toga will stab you, Natsuo will laugh, and Izuku and I will compete over who gets to tell the most embarrassing story of your lack of social graces.”

“Midoryia wouldn’t do that.” Todoroki Shouto turned to look at Izuku, who’d met Shouto this time around a few times, but hadn’t been able to bring himself to do much beyond the occasional light bit of stalking to ensure the dual-coloured boy’s mental and physical well-being. “Would you?”

“Well…” Izuku looked back into heterochromatic eyes and stalled, completely unsure how to deal with the actual emotion barely, but still visibly, there in the eyes of his friend who didn’t actually remember him.

Touya, as was apparently his custom, jumped right into the space in the conversation. “Of course he would. We’re friends now. That means he automatically gets a pass into our weird family dynamic by means of teasing, emotional avoidance, the occasional bit of violence, and gestures of unconditional support.”

Touya then nodded once, sharply, as if reaffirming his point and his brother actually nodded back, though much more slowly.

“Manly,” Kirishima muttered, to the obvious amusement of a snorting Bakugou.

Izuku took a look around the class to see confused expressions on his once-and-soon-to-be-again friends’ faces. Exceptions included Uraraka who looked a step away from ecstatic, Iida who looked to have flatlined, Asui who looked thoughtful, and Ashido who looked gleeful. Momo, on the other hand, joined several others in the outright confusion. “That’s not how friendship works?”

Izuku tilted his head, and then his body towards Momo. “It’s not? I feel like I have a lot of evidence that says it is.” He tapped his fingers against his desk, absently noticing the absence of grooves etched into the wood by his own furious writing. “I mean, shared trauma and the inability to separate stubbornness from love are important at the very least, right?”

Aizawa cut through any possible reply. “Right.” He made a motion with one hand that Izuku recognized as the man wanting to run his fingers through Izuku’s curls, but had the entire class (and an intelligently wary Touya) straightening their spines. Aizawa, naturally, caught the movement and grinned his widest, toothiest smile.

“Welcome to Heroics.”

“I’ll admit, Zawa, that sending the class to orientation was not a move I was expecting.”

“You’re part of the class, Izuku.”

“Eh, I won’t get in trouble for skipping. I have an in. My mom and Nezu are practically best friends, you know.”

“Unfortunately, yes.”

“Not that I’m opposed to sitting in this window with you, your shoulder is really quite comfortable, but I do feel compelled to ask what’s wrong.”

“…”

“Aizawa-sensei-”

“Am I allowed to teach them? To be their sensei?”

“Of course you are?”

“I’m a murderer, Izuku, and a vigilante. And I don’t regret either of those things in the slightest. How can I teach laws I’ve willingly broken, conduct I’ve willing bucked, and morals I’ve willingly bent?”

“…in the back of my closet there’s a long white scarf and a pair of yellow swimming googles that belonged to one of my favourite dress-up costumes as a kid. I’m sure you’ll be surprised to know that I did a lot of research into heroes as a kid, and one day I found out that there were these people called underground heroes who helped where no one saw them, just because they could. And then I found out that there was this hero called Eraserhead, who fought quirkless in places that were usually overlooked.”

“Izuku-“

“You’ve always been my hero, because you are, have been, and will be the kind of hero I want to become, Problem Dad… No, shit, aw, Dad. Dadzawa, society never actually ended, why the hell are you finding tears now?”

“Fucking hell, Problem Child. Alright. We saved them, so I guess I’d better teach them not to muck it all up again.”

“Yeah. We saved them. We saved them all.”

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